

[2nd February 1934]

IV.—A BILL TO AMEND THE MADRAS LOCAL BOARDS ACT, 1920, AND THE MADRAS ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT, 1920, FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES (BILL No. 2 OF 1934).

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—" Discussion on the motion made by the hon. the Raja of Bobbili to refer the Bill to amend the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, and the Madras Elementary Education Act, 1920, for certain purposes, to a Select Committee, will continue to-day."

* Rao Bahadur D. KRISHNAMURTI:—" Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support the motion to refer this Bill to the Select Committee proposed and oppose the motions made by my hon. Friends, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and Mr. Basheer Ahmed, to defer the reference to Select Committee. The Government in their Communiqué dated 6th January have placed before the House in a succinct manner the necessity that compelled them to adopt this extreme measure. I have carefully listened to the speeches made by the Opposition on this motion and particularly those of Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and Diwan Bahadur Muniswami Nayudu. I expected that they would place before the House certain proposals by way of an alternative course, to avoid the abolition of the taluk boards by a stroke of the pen, but except indulging in a few sporadic and unreasonable attacks on the hon. the Mover of this Bill characterizing the measure as retrograde and revolutionary, they have not placed any constructive suggestions before this House to set right a really serious situation that has arisen. It has been pointed out by the hon. the Mover of the Bill that the financial condition of as many as ninety taluk boards is very unsatisfactory, that about 39 are also on the verge of the same state, and that some boards have not been able to pay in proper time the salaries of their staff. In order, therefore, to avoid this difficulty, it is proposed to abolish taluk boards and distribute their functions between district boards and panchayats. It is also suggested that those district boards whose financial conditions permit it, will be bifurcated in order that they may directly come into contact with the panchayats. Panchayats, Sir, are institutions of a very recent growth and if local self-government has to be really successful and if the villagers are to take a keen interest, these institutions, namely, panchayats, should be encouraged by every possible means. The proposal to abolish the taluk boards is a step in the direction of giving panchayats more powers and affording them greater opportunities to cater to the wants of the people. Considerations of detail might well be left to the Select Committee which is representative in character, but what we are concerned with at present is, whether any convincing case has been made out by the Opposition to defer consideration of the Bill. The two amendments that have been tabled are measures which can only be characterized as dilatory. We all know that the life of the Council has been extended by one year and if the Bill is referred to public opinion and taluk boards it would virtually mean referring to the very people who are vitally affected by the Bill. It is stated that not less than 3,000 members of taluk boards are concerned in the abolition of these taluk boards, and it will be certainly the height of folly

2nd February 1934] [Mr. D. Krishnamurti]

to any party to expect them to consent to this piece of self-denying ordinance. It is not in human nature to expect consent to such a measure as this. Are we to allow these taluk boards to continue with further loss or are we to take steps to put a stop to further losses? It cannot be argued that this is a party measure in which the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government is interested. On the other hand, it affects all parties, Nationalists, Ultra-Nationalists, Justicites and Justice Democrats, one and all. If at all there is any consideration that influenced the hon. the Mover of the Bill in bringing forward this measure, it can be said that it is the consideration of efficiency and economy. It has been submitted that a Committee might be appointed to go into the financial condition of these taluk boards before such a drastic proposal as the abolition of these boards is taken up. I submit, Sir, it is stated in the Communiqué published as an annexure to this Bill, that the financial condition of the district boards and taluk boards was examined by a Special Officer and that necessary facts and figures have been collected before this step is taken. Argument has been put forward that the experience of the working of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act belies at times facts and figures. I do not know whether we are justified in instituting comparisons of this type. They are entirely different. The hon. the Mover cited the instance of Mysore, a model State, where the abolition of taluk boards is working satisfactorily; and the fact that no taluk boards exist in the United Provinces and Central Provinces are all instances where practically the working of this scheme has been tested and is not found wanting. Well, Sir, I won't be a party to any measure which would be rushed through in haste without knowing the consequences, but other Provinces of this country afford an instance where this scheme has been working satisfactorily and we are only copying them in adopting this measure.

"Now, Sir, it is also proposed by the hon. the Mover that by the abolition of the Village Development Fund, the financial condition of the district boards would be improved. I do not mean to say that this Bill, as it is in itself, reaches the height of political wisdom and sagacity, but, Sir, in the Select Committee, which is big enough—over forty—various facts can be brought before the attention of the Committee and improvements can be effected to render this Bill more practicable and useful. I submit, Sir, purely considerations of humanity and considerations affecting vested interests ought not to weigh in a matter of this kind. As many as 2,000 employees would be thrown out of employment and it would no doubt be a difficult problem to find them employment in these hard days. It is indeed a serious situation, as was already pointed out by the hon. the Mover of the Bill, but as many as 70 per cent would be absorbed in the reshuffling and provision would be made for giving preference to the remaining 30 per cent in all future vacancies.

"The other argument advanced is whether the abolition of the taluk boards would promote real economy. In the Communiqué it was

[Mr. D. Krishnamurti] [2nd February 1934]

pointed out at length that by making small changes in the staff economy would be effected to a considerable extent. This is neither the time nor the stage to examine arguments that the Bill should be circulated for eliciting public opinion. That will only mean the postponement of the consideration of the Bill till the Doomsday. It will not come before this House again either at the end of this year or even the next year for the matter of that. Here is a real measure of economy and efficiency forced on the hands of the Government by extraordinary situations to allow panchayats and district boards to function more satisfactorily and usefully. I expected my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, whose knowledge and experience of the working of local boards is well known to suggest some alternative proposals to the House to obviate the necessity of abolishing these taluk boards. With his great experience, I thought he would be able to suggest an alternative proposal and come to their rescue in tackling this very knotty problem. I have analysed the various arguments of his speech but nowhere can I find any constructive suggestions to help the Government out of this difficult problem, except characterizing the measure as undemocratic and so on. How is he going to save these taluk boards from the financial bankruptcy which the Government Communiqué mentions by this dilatory motion and giving them one more year of life? Perhaps he is setting the sail to catch the breeze of popular favour at the expense of efficiency and economy. It is these considerations that actuated the Government to propose this measure. No reasonable alternative is available to the Government and this is the only course to be adopted to save financial bankruptcy. I therefore support the motion to refer the Bill to Select Committee."

Khan Bahadur MAHMUD SHAHINAD SAHIB Bahadur:—"Mr. President, Sir, these taluk boards have been in existence for nearly half a century and their hoary traditions cannot be so easily swept away. Further people have not had sufficient time to consider the effect of the proposed changes. The Press Communiqué was issued only on the 6th January and the Bill itself was published on the 18th, only twelve days after the Press Communiqué itself was published. People thought that they would be given sufficient time to consider the implications of the changes proposed in the Communiqué and the local boards thought that they would be consulted before such a measure is actually introduced, but nothing of the sort was done. There was nothing wrong in consulting the local boards or even the district boards though only the former are interested and not the latter; there was nothing wrong in taking them into confidence.

11-30
e.m. "Now, the people were taken by surprise when they learnt that the Government were intending to rush through this measure and the changes proposed in the Communiqué. In fact, I first got the information about the introduction of the Bill from the taluk board clerks. The Bill was not received by me then. Two of the clerks came to me with some paper in their hands and broke the news to me with tears in their

2nd February 1934] [Mr. Mahmud Schamnad]

eyes. I say, Sir, it is not proper to rush through such an important measure, without giving sufficient time to the local bodies concerned to consider the effect of the changes. It is a measure in which the Government is taking upon themselves grave responsibilities. It is therefore proper that they also should pause and consider the reactions it may have. As for myself, I have no doubt that the proposed changes will not work successfully. The Government may work out on paper and show us that this will result in a saving of 8.87 lakhs. But, I think when it is actually worked, it will be found that this measure will involve more expenditure. When the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act was on the anvil of this Legislature, it was calculated also on paper that the operation of the Act will result in large savings to the district boards and also to the Government. But what do you see, Sir, now? I say, Sir, the local boards have not been given sufficient time to judge the effects of the working of the amended Act of 1930. The boards constituted according to the new Act have hardly been in existence for 15 months now. They have not had sufficient time to justify their existence. If ninety boards have had recurring deficits, such boards may be given a warning to cut down unnecessary expenditure and balance their budgets. Surely, such a step must succeed. I can tell you that the Kasaragod Taluk Board was reconstituted according to the new Act in November 1932. Then it had a deficit of about Rs. 40,000. When the next budget was submitted in March 1933, the board could balance the budget by reducing the expenditure, i.e., by abolishing certain superfluous posts and reducing the pay of some where it was found unnecessarily high. The budget of the board for 1934-35 which has already been submitted in the first week of January is a surplus budget. In it provision is made for capital expenditure, revised scales of pay for teachers and also for additional teachers, etc. Therefore, Sir, I would request the Chief Minister to accept this amendment and have the Bill circulated. If he still persists and wants to take the risk, I will leave it there. However, let there be no voting on this motion; but if it comes to that, I shall not take part in it because I happen to be the president of a taluk board."

* RAJA OF KHAHLIKOTE:—" Mr. President, Sir, I am one of those who feel that some change is necessary in the administration of Local Self-Government. To what extent these changes are to be made and in what form they should be is, of course, a matter of opinion, but, Mr. President, one thing is certain, that is, the existing situation of allowing a large number of taluk boards to run with deficit balances with not even enough money to pay the salaries of their staff must be put a stop to. It has been said that the taluk boards have served their usefulness and there is no further use for them. I do not think this is correct. Taluk boards have existed as smaller units of Local Self-Government almost from the days British Rule was established in this country. It cannot be denied that these institutions have been serving a useful purpose of controlling elementary education of the country.

[Rajā of Khallikote]

[2nd February 1934]

They have also some control over the Medical and Public Health branch of the administration. They have done a lot towards improving communications in the district, especially in concentrating their attention to small village roads which is being appreciated by the poor villager. Taluk boards that existed prior to 1930, co-extensive with each revenue division, were really useful institutions and very few of them had deficits. It was, I think, the greatest mistake to bifurcate and trifurcate these boards with the idea that, being smaller units, they would pay more attention to the needs of the people. The Act of 1930 instead of improving the condition of local boards has made it far worse. When the Act of 1930 was passed, it was stated that favouritism and partiality prevailed in paying more attention to the taluk from which the president and his party came to the disadvantage of the minority that came from the other taluks. This is not correct. The president had the responsibility of administering the affairs of his board to the best advantage of the whole area and he had also to avoid a vote of censure by his board and strictures from Government. No responsible president would ever act in any other manner and, whatever defects existed in the old system could have been easily remedied by giving to the district board some larger powers of control and supervision over the capital expenditure of taluk boards, to see that the expenditure was evenly distributed over the whole area. Instead of trying to remedy the minor defects under the old system, we have, by the Act of 1930, made the situation far worse. What is the existing state of affairs? These bifurcated and trifurcated taluk boards, far from being enabled to improve the condition of the areas entrusted to them, are left in a most helpless financial condition. Their little income is spent away in the payment to, the staff, in some cases they have no money even to do this; their income is very small and they are not able to do anything.

“Sir, it is argued that, as we are going to have more panchayats, there is no need to have the taluk boards. In the first place there is not enough human material in the villages to carry on the panchayat work efficiently and in the second place the constitution of the panchayats will, I am afraid, add more friction to the already existing quarrels and parties in villages. From the point of view of Local Self-Government the ordinary villager is not very ambitious and, as far as I can see, he lives now quite a contented life. Of course, he might want a road here and a road there which is considered according to the order of importance and availability of funds. The taluk board, wherever possible, looks after the sanitation of the village and, where this is not done, the villagers themselves have a wonderful system of contributing a few rupees among themselves to attend to this work. You are now going to introduce into this country life, a system of elections, ballot papers and ballot boxes. The ordinary villager may be quite unfit to discharge his responsibility in the field of Local Self-Government but he will consider it a great prestige to be a member or president of a panchayat. He will want to get into the boards at any cost and will begin to spend money like anything. I have

2nd February 1934] [Raja of Khallikote]

known cases where people have become ruined over these elections and have become paupers. They spend thousands just for the honour and glory of succeeding in the elections. They will mortgage their houses and their lands and even their wives' jewellery for the sake of becoming a member. In these days of depression the voters in a village, no doubt, will have some additional income, as a price for their votes, and what will happen after the boards are actually formed? There is bound to be party feeling, friction and petty jealousies inside these boards with the result that most of the time will be spent in quarrels between one party and the other and little or no work will be done for the good of the village. Mr. President, without any exaggeration I would like to say that this has actually been the case in some villages that I know and the people themselves have become so fed up that they have given up the idea of having panchayats. They are none the worse for it and are living quite happily.

" Panchayat officers are appointed to organize and co-ordinate the work of panchayats and to constitute more panchayats. The existing panchayats are in a terrible state of mismanagement and slackness and I, for one, would be very grateful if the existing panchayats are improved first before new ones are started. Whatever that may be, I ask one simple question. Can new panchayats be formed without the influence and help of non-officials? You may have a hundred panchayat officers in a district, but these people are after all officials and strangers to the villagers. A panchayat will never be a success if it is thrust on the villagers against their wish. To make panchayats a success, the villagers must be made to realize the benefits and they must themselves come forward with their co-operation and enthusiasm to work them. Now, who can do this work of exercising proper influence over the villagers? Surely it is impossible for the panchayat officer to do this and you cannot expect the district board president to devote his attention to the thousands of villages in the district. Surely, it is the taluk board president, with his intimate knowledge of men and matters of his defined and compact area, that can exercise a proper influence for the formation of these panchayats. It is a pity that taluk boards have not paid enough attention to encourage the panchayats, but if a statutory duty was cast upon the taluk boards to organize panchayats and if the 3 pies cess intended for panchayats was pooled together and earmarked for expenditure in the villages only these difficulties would not have occurred. After all it is the taluk board that is the best non-official agency to organize and foster the growth of panchayats.

" By wiping out of existence the taluk boards it is estimated that about 2,000 people will be thrown out of employment. Under clause 8 of the transitional provisions, no doubt there is scope for the appointment of such persons, but I fear that this will not be a satisfactory state of things.

[Raja of Khallikote] [2nd February 1934]

"Just now, Mr. President, there are 208 non-official honorary workers and another equal number, serving as presidents and vice-presidents of the taluk boards. Under the old system, when there were only 130 taluk boards, there were 260 non-officials in charge of the Local Self-Government administration, as presidents and vice-presidents, in addition to hundreds of members. By a stroke of the pen you are going to not only deprive the public of the services of these honorary workers, but you are removing the splendid opportunity these people had of learning to administer their own domestic affairs. If taluk boards are to go, I hope there will be ample scope for such willing honorary workers to be of some use in the standing committees that are contemplated in the Bill.

11-45
a.m.

"Sir, an important feature of the Bill is the appointment of a District Educational Officer and a District Executive Officer. Under the existing Act, taluk boards and their presidents are responsible for the supervision and management of elementary education. Of course if taluk boards are to be abolished the work of the district board will be considerably increased, but is it fair to remove the non-official agency that is controlling now the elementary education and thrust in its place an official such as a District Educational Officer? Whatever may have been the faults of the old system of taluk boards, there was one potent benefit of the whole scheme and it was this: that instead of one person, that is, the district board president getting trained in the principles of Local Self-Government, there were as many as six or eight taluk board presidents in each district administering of course their smaller units and thereby gaining considerable experience in the field of Local Self-Government. This, in the new scheme, is going to be completely done away with and in its place we are to have a District Educational Officer to administer elementary education and this person, as far as I can see, will be an official. If this is coming, we can just as well hand over the elementary education to the Government or rather to my hon. Friend, the Minister of Education, to manage directly instead of having a show of things to say that elementary education will in future be under district boards whereas really in substance it will be under the District Educational Officer contemplated in this Bill. As I have already said, the work of the District Board will increase and perhaps it would be wise to have an officer to supervise the elementary education in the absence of taluk boards, but let this officer be a subordinate of the district board and help the district board president to supervise the schools. Let his work be that of supervising the elementary schools only and recommending to the president, district board, changes or modifications that are necessary; but, to give this officer straightaway the power of supervision and management also, as is mentioned in the Bill, appears to me rather a retrograde step. I feel that educational officers should not be thrust on the district boards unless they themselves want it. It may be that in a small district the work of supervising elementary education can be done quite satisfactorily through the standing committee contemplated in the Bill. Therefore the

2nd February 1934] [Raja of Khallikote]

appointment of an educational officer should be left to the discretion of the local boards.

“ The abolition of the village development fund is a move in the right direction. This fund is really a part and parcel of the district board's ordinary resources, but with a different name. Whatever may have been the objects with which this fund was constituted, it has not certainly served its purpose. Under the rules and instructions that are issued from time to time for the administration of this fund, we are in the most unfortunate position of utilizing the fund for capital works only. We cannot spend a pie of it for the maintenance of these capital works. As no other source is available, these capital works of roads and water-supply, constructed at great cost, are left to look after themselves without any maintenance and the good money spent over them has been a waste. This has certainly been a very unwise policy and it is but right that the district board should get back its ordinary resources which it was enjoying prior to the passing of the Act of 1930.

“ I wish to refer briefly to clause 11 of the Bill, that is new section 27 (a). No doubt, standing committees of the district boards will be necessary to exercise power of supervision over some of the important branches of the administration, but instead of giving the Government the power of appointing chairmen of the standing committees, I would suggest that the president of the local board should have the power of nominating a chairman from among the members of his board. Of course the president of the local board must necessarily be a member of every standing committee, but it is not necessary that he should be the chairman of every committee. If this is done, it will, in my opinion, give a further scope for non-officials to have some training in the administration.

“ I do not think the scheme of bifurcation of district boards will be a success. It is stated that about ten lakhs is spent on the establishment of district boards. Through bifurcation it is almost certain that this expenditure will be doubled. There will also be the extra expenditure for constructing buildings for the new boards. Then there will be the appointment of district board engineers, district panchayat officers and so on with the result that the little saving contemplated for district boards will be consumed in all this heavy expenditure. I am sure that just as we are repenting now for the bifurcation and trifurcation of the taluk boards we shall repent for the same in the case of the district boards. A district board has always been known as an area co-extensive with a Revenue district. The standard of efficiency or otherwise of the roads and other institutions maintained by the district board has been uniform. This uniformity will disappear and I fear in the same Revenue district with about two or three district boards functioning we shall probably have good roads, bad roads and no roads. It will also throw additional burden on the staff of the Collectorate to allocate the land-cess to the various district boards that will

[Raja of Khallikote] [2nd February 1934]

be formed within the same Revenue district. For these reasons, Mr. President, I am not in favour of bifurcating a Revenue district. At any rate in the case of my district there seems to be absolutely no reason for bifurcating the district board, in view of the fact that the district is going to be split up shortly when the new Orissa Province is formed. A portion of my district covering the area of about five existing taluk boards, as the White Paper boundaries stand at present, is going to be transferred soon to the new Orissa Province. In existing Orissa there are what are called local boards which correspond to the taluk boards here. There are no panchayat officers, no district educational officers or executive officers. I therefore wonder if it is worth while introducing these drastic changes in my district or at any rate in the areas that are going over to the new Province.

“ Mr. President, finally there is the question of the appointment of a district executive officer against which I wish to record my most emphatic protest. My hon. Friend from Chittoor observed the other day that the words ‘district board president’ wherever they occur should be deleted and the words ‘executive officers’ substituted. I am sorry that a gentleman of his mature judgment and experience should hold such views. Most of the district boards are now appointing secretaries to assist them in the administration. If the work is heavy, as undoubtedly it will be in future, let the district boards be given the option of appointing one or more secretaries according to their choice. Why thrust executive officers on them when there is absolutely no need I cannot really understand. Of course in a municipality, things are different as the taxes have to be collected by the municipality direct whereas in the local boards we have the most efficient agency of Government through whom our taxes are collected and given to us. I cannot help thinking that local self-government in the district will be a sham and a mockery if an executive officer is thrust on the district boards. The president will have nothing to do except preside over the meetings and what policy can he or his board frame when the executive officer will really be the boss of the whole show? It is for hon. Members and the hon. Minister to judge what training this will really give to the non-officials. Apart from these difficulties, as far as I can judge, there is bound to be friction and misunderstanding between the executive officer and the president and also the other officers of the board. For an executive officer to command respect and dignity you will have to pay him a fairly decent salary and keep him on a par with the district board engineer or perhaps even higher. The little money that will be saved in throwing out of employment a few unfortunate, low paid, miserable clerks will go to feed the district executive officer. Therefore, even financially, the proposal to have executive officers will give no relief to the district boards.

“ Sir, I have heard it said that each hon. Minister in charge of the portfolio of Local Self-Government is anxious to have to his credit a Local Boards Amendment Act as a feather to his cap. Although every

2nd February 1934] [Raja of Khallikote]

hon. Minister is entitled to feel this way, I would appeal to my hon. Friend, the Raja of Bobbili, to be very cautious in the step that he is taking. The present Act of 1930 is clearly a case of acting in haste and repenting at leisure. I only hope that the same will not be said of the Bill that is before the House now but that a measure will be framed which will do some substantial good to the local boards making them, as they should be, useful and representative institutions for the good of the people, at the same time bearing in mind that it is most important to stabilize their finances which have all gone wrong during the last four years. Mr. President, what with the appointment of executive officers, educational officers, etc., what with the hundred and one restrictions imposed on local bodies, to me it seems an irony of fate that, while His Majesty's Government and those great statesmen in England are busy now trying to evolve a scheme, whereby more power and responsibility will be transferred to our countrymen, we here are trying to curtail and restrict the liberty and activities of local institutions." (Cheers.)

* Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—"Sir, I was listening very patiently and very carefully to the very impressive speech of the hon. Member, the Raja of Khallikote, and the one idea that it left in my mind is that he is an advocate for a change in the administration of local self-government. This change, according to him, should be radical and not as proposed in the amending Bill. The fundamental fact that there is wrong somewhere and that the administration of the taluk boards is such that it requires a radical change is admitted by him. He differs only in details. According to him the remedy proposed is not satisfactory. He thinks that there should be opportunities to get training in the administration of the affairs of self-governing institutions. The hon. Member thinks, however, that the remedy proposed will not at all be conducive to the political education of the people. The only fallacy in his argument consists in his statement that the taluk boards should remain though a change is necessary. This is somewhat incomprehensible to me. He must remember that the taluk board areas are comparatively speaking larger areas than panchayat areas and that therefore it is the latter bodies that will be in a position to be in closer touch with the people. Again, the unit of administration always should be the panchayats. From the beginning of my public career I have been fighting hard for the resuscitation and reorganization of the village panchayat system. The Provincial Administration should be based on the village panchayats. What is the good of having district boards alone where the district board presidents would not be in close touch with the people? Are not therefore village panchayats essential? If you are earnest about local self-government, you should see that the unit of administration is made as small as possible so that it may be in touch with the wants of the people. Panchayats are the best institutions for the purpose of administering the affairs of the village areas. Rural affairs do best receive help from the hands of the rural population. It is not by having a central agency miles and miles away from the village that you can have effective work done for the benefit

[Sir A. P. Patro]

[2nd February 1934]

of the people. It is out of the question to think of taluk boards as the proper agency to encourage the panchayats. I am sorry to differ from my hon. Friend in this respect. From one's experience of the districts one can say that the taluk boards are jealous of the growth and development of the panchayat system and that these institutions stand in the way of the progress of these village units. The hon. Member himself is aware how often he had to fight the taluk boards in their interference with the working of the panchayats. Therefore I am surprised to see him advocating the cause of the taluk boards as effective agencies for popularizing and developing panchayat institutions. Under the existing Act there is jealousy between the panchayats and the taluk boards. The cause of this jealousy must be removed by reforming the taluk boards. If you take away the small and useless taluk boards and vest that power in the panchayats much can be done. Taluk boards may be reformed and remodelled. But you need not put forth the mistakes committed by some taluk boards as the reason for abolishing them. Because some taluk boards have committed mistakes is no reason for abolishing them all. Panchayats are doing useful work. There is no good saying the elective system now introduced is fraught with evil consequences and the administration will be a failure.

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noon.

"I am afraid the hon. Member has not properly visualized the situation regarding the panchayats of the future. For in the future Constitution of India the people who will be returned to the Legislative Councils and Federal Assemblies will be those who have got a good grounding in the administration of the village panchayats. Therefore, if you don't reorganize, reform and rehabilitate the village panchayats, how can you expect these people to properly function when their time comes. So what I say is, you make the foundation strong, so that the edifice may be strong. Unless you do this, the superstructure cannot be firm. Therefore the village panchayats must be developed. At present there is frequent, if not always, conflicts between the presidents of panchayat boards and those of taluk boards, and so long as these conflicts go on, neither of them can grow healthy. Therefore it is desirable that this element of friction should be done away with, and it is with this end in view that this Bill has been brought forward now.

"Then, Sir, it has been said that this is a drastic measure that has been proposed; and it has been asked from quarters more than one, 'Could you not think of any other alternative?' The principle underlying the Bill is to reform the taluk boards and subdivide the existing district boards, wherever it is possible, in such a way that the functions of the taluk boards could be distributed among the district boards, sub-district boards and the panchayats. That being so, where does the difficulty come in?

"Then the other objection seriously urged is, 'you have not given us sufficient time to consider the pros and cons of this Bill, or rather, this Bill is being rather hastily rushed through this House.' In my

2nd February 1934]

[Sir A. P. Patro]

opinion this is a very lame excuse. I know, as indeed some of my hon. friends know, that the present talented Secretary of the Local Self-Government Department has exposed the difficulties and the defects experienced in the day to day working of the Local Self-Government Department. No doubt he was very cautious in his speech, coming as he does, fresh with his experience in the administration of the City Corporation; and so he thought that the public require a note of warning. Therefore, three months ago he indicated the directions in which the reform should proceed. Furthermore, a Special Officer was appointed to gauge the correct financial stability of the various local bodies, and he has laid bare their condition. Thus it is admitted on all hands that the financial condition of the local bodies is in such a perilous state that it requires nothing but reformation. The question arose as to how best this should be done. Is it by abolishing the taluk boards and subdividing the district boards; or is it by reverting to the pre-1930 taluk and district board days? The latter step was not found to be possible and advisable, and hence the present move. Thus the Bill has not been hastily brought forward.

“Again there is nothing to prevent the details suggested by the Raja of Kallikote being discussed in the Select Committee, the case of divisional boards. In the very admirable speech, always characteristic of him, the hon. Member from Chittoor made the other day, he pointed out that these things could be discussed in the Select Committee. In his explanation he has also shown that this is a matter which requires analysis, and after careful analysis he has come to the conclusion that it is no good abolishing the Village Development Fund. I may say here, that from the very beginning he and I insisted on maintaining this fund. And here we differ from the Raja of Kallikote. Anyhow this is not a matter of principle, but only a matter of procedure, which the hon. Chief Minister himself has said may be considered in the Select Committee, as the principle involved in this Bill is the reformation of taluk boards and the division of district boards, in circumstances where it is justifiable. Therefore, Sir, it is only just and proper that all these matters should be considered in the large Select Committee that has been proposed, where, the ripe experience of the members on taluk boards and district boards may be brought to bear.

“One word, Sir, with regard to the hon. Mover of the amendment that a committee should be set up to ascertain ways and means by which the present state of affairs may be mended. In my opinion, if the hon. Member had read the past history aright, surely he would not have brought forth this proposal. For most of us who have done so have come to the one conclusion, viz., that there is a very serious situation at present in the Presidency, that a crisis has arisen in the administration of the affairs of Local Self-Government and that that crisis, if not immediately attended to, will possibly lead to a greater danger, namely, the insolvency of the taluk boards. Now if such a state of affairs was to arise, how are Government to meet the

[Sir A. P. Patro]

[2nd February 1934]

situation? That is *the* question which hon. Members should ponder over for a moment. If you are to put off this matter, then how are you going to prepare the budgets of the taluk boards and run their administration? Therefore it is wise and practical of this Government that they took up this matter early, and we as Members who have had to do with Local Self-Government administration feel that this is no hasty measure, but one which is urgent, wise and practical, designed to avert a catastrophe."

* MR. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, those of us who listened to the speech of the hon. Chief Minister in connexion with the introduction of this Bill cannot but agree that the picture he presented is indeed deplorable. And I am willing to go further and say that it is no exaggerated account in any way. But much of the trouble that we find ourselves in now, I venture to say without any offence to anybody, is the result of the policy pursued by the several successive Ministers of Local Self-Government. I would say this is due to three causes: (1) to the sins of omission and commission of the local bodies, (2) to the lack of co-operation between the Reserved and Transferred Halves and (3) to the apathy and, may I add, neglect of the Government in charge of Local Self-Government of their undoubted and obvious responsibilities. I say, Sir, 'sins of omission and commission' of local bodies, because if we examine carefully, we shall find that several bodies have been reckless in the matter of expenditure. Some of them have been having a staff inordinately large to their requirement; and their retinue of menial staff reminds one of that of nobles and zamindars.

"The second reason I adduced is the lack of co-operation between the Reserved and the Transferred Halves. If you ask any of the old Civilian officers as to how they like their work, they will readily say that they do not like it half as much as they used to do in the pre-reform days. If you press them for the reason, they will tell you that, in those days they had a hand in the shaping of activities that is now delegated to the local boards. In rural sanitation and hygiene, in elementary education, in fairs and festivals, in short in every aspect of rural life they had a deciding voice. But now, since the local boards are managing these affairs, they do not care to have anything to do with the work of the local bodies and their administration. This attitude is but a reflection of the attitude of the Government at the top. If, for example, at the present day the Local Self-Government Minister seeks the help of the Revenue Department in regard to a particular item of business, there is always a feeling on the part of the Reserved Half that it is not their part to help him. If elections are to be held and the help of the Revenue officials is sought, Government immediately ask, 'Will you pay the travelling allowance, or meet this and the other items of expenditure?' If the Minister wants to levy tax on non-motor vehicles and invites the co-operation of the Revenue agency for its collection, the latter raises some sort of objection or other to the proposal. So this is another cause for the present state of affairs.

2nd February 1934] [Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar]

"And the third reason lies with the Ministry of Local Self-Government itself. In the speech of the hon. Chief Minister it was said that already at the introduction of the last measure there were forty taluk boards in an insolvent condition being unable to meet their expenditure without outside help. And yet the Government without any hesitation whatsoever divided the areas under them and increased the taluk boards to eighty. It looks as if they perhaps gave no thought to the obvious consequences of the more than ready willingness to oblige X, Y or Z and multiply boards.

"Now, Sir, what is the remedy, one may ask. The hon. Chief Minister has come forward with his proposal, and that is to abolish the taluk boards. I see, the evil is great, and the proposed remedy a drastic one. Though that step is, perhaps inevitable, I cannot ignore my feeling that the taluk boards have a place in the future of our country. It may be that you cannot but abolish them now but in the India of the future they are a necessity, and the functions that they will have to discharge then will not necessarily be those they are discharging now. They are likely to be such as will vitally affect the interest of the people at large. For example, I expect that the taluk boards of the future will be given the task of supplying agricultural machinery to the people, seed to the farmers, in short give every sort of assistance to the agriculturists that may tend to increase the yield of the land. So, I would ask the hon. Chief Minister to try and see whether he cannot introduce in the framework of his scheme, some administrative machinery, call it by what name you like, a standing committee or joint panchayat board or union of panchayats to supervise a few specified activities in the taluk.

"In this connexion I would ask the hon. Minister not to impair the efficiency of the panchayat, for the panchayat is the foundation of the Government of the country. I appeal to him, in his zeal for the abolition of the taluk boards, not to weaken the panchayat, and to avoid the temptation of splitting up the district boards into two or three boards. As it is, he should know from his own experience the troubles attendant on the exercise of his powers of patronage. The late lamented Raja of Panagal, once said that for everyone on whom he bestowed a favour he created surely ten enemies.

"That is no exaggeration. Let not the hon. Minister yield to the promptings of his friends and unnecessarily divide the district boards. Further, I request him earnestly to allow, whenever possible, the presidents of district boards to have good and competent executive officers who can relieve them of the extra work that will be necessarily thrown on them by this measure."

Rao Bahadur A. T. PANNIRSELVAM:—"I rise neither to support nor oppose the main motion or any of the amendments. I intend merely to say, by way of general remarks, something on the Bill that has been introduced. I should like at the outset to remind hon. Members of this House that the district boards and taluk boards are institutions,

12-15
p.m.

[Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam] [2nd February 1934]

which, as far as this Province is concerned, have been sanctified by ages. If they are institutions which have stood for over and above 50 years and which I dare say have given a very good account of themselves in the official days, despite whatever criticism might be offered from any quarter, they have given a very much better account of themselves during the non-official days. I may say that the work done by the district boards and the taluk boards during the last ten years, after all these boards have come under the non-official management, has been certainly very much more progressive and very much more advantageous to the people. As an illustration of that I may quote the work done by that single taluk board, the taluk board which has been presided over by my hon. Friend, Mr. Tajuddin. During the last ten years during which it has been under non-official presidents, the number of schools under it has increased from 62 to 120. Sixty-two elementary schools during a period of forty years of official rule! It will be clearly seen that there has been an increase of cent per cent during the last twelve years. Coming to roads, from 14 miles of village communication we have somewhere about 75 miles of village communication during the last twelve years. Coming to medical relief, where there were three dispensaries as a result of forty years work, there are now five dispensaries. Previously only 20 villages were served with village communications, now 100 villages are served. All that under the presidency of non-official presidents. The Tanjore Taluk Board is presided over by a very capable gentleman Mr. Umamaheswaram Pillai, the best in my own district. I may say that with my experience of the working of all the taluk boards, I can easily compare the work done by other taluk boards.

“ Sir, as these district and taluk boards are institutions which have a history of their own, which have built up a tradition of their own and which have given a very good account of themselves, we should indeed hesitate before dismantling all these institutions. As I understand the Bill, it aims not merely at the abolition of the taluk boards, but the abolition of district boards as well. It may be that the name ‘district board’ is retained in the Bill. But in effect the district boards and taluk boards disappear. District boards as we know them are to be split up into two or three boards which may be better called by the name of central boards as was originally thought of by the Leader of the Opposition when he occupied the Treasury Bench. It will be a misnomer to call them district boards. It may be said that these are all sentimental. But I may state that sentiment generally is supported by logic. In spite of all these things if we find that the state of things in the local bodies has become so bad that there is no other way of escape, except to abolish them, by all means let us abolish them, but let us put in their stead some other institutions which will serve better the purposes for which these institutions were originally introduced. With this view, I will, Sir, with your permission, say a few words. In considering this question, we have to see whether the

2nd February 1934] [Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam]

reasons which the Government have set forth for the present unsatisfactory state of things in the local bodies are found to be true. In the communiqué which they have issued the first reason they have advanced for the bad financial position of taluk boards is the Act of 1930. Under the Act of 1930 compulsory cess of 18 pies was levied. It also provided for the distribution of these 18 pies. In the communiqué it is stated that that provision is mainly responsible for the bad position of the taluk boards' finances. Let us now consider what the position was under the old Act, rather prior to 1930. Prior to 1930 it was obligatory on the local bodies to levy a cess of 1 anna leaving it to the option of the local bodies to levy an additional cess of 6 pies. In my district, neither the district board nor the taluk boards ever levied additional cess. We were levying a cess of only 1 anna in the rupee. Under the Act of 1930, the levy of 6 pies is made obligatory upon us. But in most cases, I find from the communiqué, that this additional cess of 6 pies which was only optional under the old Act, was as a matter of fact being levied. Therefore, the position comes to this: that in the case of boards prior to 1930 we were not levying additional cess, but we have provided them with additional cess by the Act of 1930. From the communiqué it will be clear that these boards have suffered a diminution in income. They say that the distribution that has been imposed by the Act is responsible for the bad condition of the taluk boards. We find under the Act of 1930 that 6 pies land cess goes to the coffers of the taluk board, 3 pies goes to the Village Panchayat Fund and 3 pies to the Village Development Fund. Thus you will see that while the taluk boards can now get only 6 pies they have not the advantage of 3 pies which if they were so minded they could have levied under the old Act. That argument overlooks one fundamental fact. Three pies which goes to the Village Panchayat Fund, is it a loss to the taluk board? Is it not used by the village panchayat for the purpose of improving the village communication, village sanitation and so on which but for the existence of the village panchayats the taluk boards would have taken over. I can only say that the 3 pies does not go to the fund of the taluk board. To that extent the taluk board is also relieved from the burden which would otherwise have fallen upon it. Therefore, I feel that this 3 pies is really no loss to the taluk board.

"Then as regards the Village Development Fund, if you will look into this, you will find that this fund is to be utilized for the purpose of village communication, rural water-supply and village sanitation which the taluk board has to attend. It is true that this Village Development Fund is not being administered by the taluk board. Under the Act it is being administered by a Central Body called the Village Development Committee, but the purposes for which this fund can be utilized are purposes for which the taluk board is responsible. Therefore this 3 pies now contributed to the Village Development Fund are intended for the taluk boards. Therefore, under the Act of 1930, in place of compulsory cess of 6 pies and optional cess of 3 pies making

[Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam] [2nd February 1934]

the total 9 pies which would have gone to serve the needs of the villages for which the taluk boards are responsible, they will be really getting 1 anna 6 pies the taluk board, 3 pies the village panchayat and 3 pies the Village Development Fund. Therefore it seems to me that the first argument that has been advanced by the Government that the present financial position of the taluk boards is bad does not hold good.

"The next argument that has been advanced was based on the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act. As far as that is concerned, I say only this much. I do not intend by any means to flatter the Leader of the Justice Democrats for all the acts which he has done as Minister. If there is one thing for which he can claim credit and for which he has earned the eternal gratitude of the poor agriculturists, it is that Act. It is the Act by which the agriculturists were relieved of their trouble and nuisance of having to pay As. 4 for every cart at every toll-gate. He gave the relief curiously at a time when the villager needed it most. If the toll had existed to-day, what would be the fate of the villager? The paddy which was selling at Rs. 3 and Rs. 4 five years ago is now selling at As. 14 or Re. 1 and with the existence of the toll the value of paddy per kalam would have probably further gone down by at least one anna."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"Tolls will come in again."

RAO BAHADUR A. T. PANNIRSELVAM:—"If they come, the poor peasants will starve. I wish they never come."

"Sir, there might have been some miscalculation as to the income which was expected under the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act. Time and again it has been said that that was a hasty piece of legislation and that there was over calculation. If for a moment allowance is made for the financial depression which somehow or other synchronised almost with the passing of this Act, we can see why the income under the Act is low. Owing to the economic depression prevailing in the country even without that Act, the amount of income which was derivable both by way of motor licence and tolls would have considerably fallen. Are we to think that the district boards would have remained unaffected when all round the world every kind of income, of Government, of local bodies except that of Government servants, had gone down?"

12-30
p.m.

"Therefore I say, Sir, that it is again wrong to put down to the discredit of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act this bad financial position from which local boards are suffering. It seems to me therefore that the real reason for the bad financial position of taluk boards is the general financial depression. Why should we take it that the local boards have got some chronic defect inherent in them due to which they are in a bad financial position now? As I said, these local boards have been in existence for fifty years and for fifty years they have been able to balance their budgets. If latterly, during the last three or four years

2nd February 1934] [Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam]

during which also we have had this worldwide financial depression, taluk boards are badly off, are we not to find the causes of the disease elsewhere than to where the communiqué points. What is the remedy which the communiqué suggests? It suggests the abolition of taluk boards and it seems to take it that, a district board, with no other link between itself and the village panchayat, would be able to carry on the local administration as efficiently or more efficiently and economically than it is now possible to do. Let us consider that aspect of the matter. If you are going to abolish taluk boards and substitute what you would call a district board, are you really going to effect any economy? The funds available to you are going to be the same. The cess is not going to be increased. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas you are levying and distributing in a particular manner will be distributed in a different manner. You are not suggesting any additional sources of revenue. The income is there—fixed and unalterable. Turning to the expenditure it is probable that by abolishing taluk boards and substituting district boards, you might be able to cut down expenditure. But in what directions are you going to cut down expenditure, I ask? One has been suggested—staff. Let us consider the question of staff. If you are going to abolish taluk boards, you are going to give these functions to the district board. I presume that each local body is staffed to the extent to which it is necessary to cope with its work. You are going to give additional work to the district boards and for that additional work, will you not have to appoint additional staff? What you take away from taluk boards, you are going to tag on to district boards. It might be, let us say, that if ten taluk boards employ five clerks each, there might be no need to employ all the 50 of them; it might be that only 20 or 25 or 30 of them will be required and there might be a saving there. Next let us come to the travelling allowance payable to members of taluk boards and district boards. In that connexion, I would like to put this question. Take ten taluk boards with twenty members each, there will be 200 members in all. Take a district board, I presume that if you are going to bifurcate the district board, you will increase the number of members for a district. The present maximum is 56 for a board and let us take it that the maximum strength for a bifurcated district board will be about 45 or 50. Will it be cheaper or at least will the saving effected be considerable when you consider the two aspects: Two hundred members each meeting in his own taluk headquarters as against ninety or one hundred members each meeting in his own district headquarters? The travelling allowance payable to each member of the district board is bound to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 times the travelling allowance payable to a taluk board member. There again, the amount that you are going to save is not going to be considerable. Anyhow, let us take it that you will be able to reduce the expenditure on the staff by 50 per cent and the expenditure on travelling allowances by another 50 per cent if you like. As against this, what is the additional expenditure you are going to impose? For each district board you are going to appoint one executive officer in place of the zero number of executive officers at present.

[Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam] [2nd February 1934]

For a district board which is bifurcated, you will have two executive officers, you will have one panchayat officer in addition, you will have one district board engineer in addition and one more district educational officer. Thus there will be four or five persons more, all of them fairly well paid whom you are going to appoint in order to carry on the work of a district board. Well, where is the saving, I ask? The saving on the staff, on the poor 30-rupee clerk and the saving in the travelling allowance. As against this you are going to incur additional expenditure by way of pay to all these additional officers. Therefore, it seems to me, Sir, that considered purely as a question of finance, you are not going to relieve the situation to any considerable extent.

"Next, it is said that the functions of taluk boards and district boards are such that they overlap. There again, I am not able to see where the overlapping comes in. True, the district board looks after education and the taluk board also looks after education, but they are two different kinds of education that they are looking after—secondary education and elementary education. There is no overlapping at all, unless it be that both of them happen to be supervised by the same Governmental staff under the control of the District Educational Officer.

"Then again roads. The district board roads are absolutely different from village communication. The district board's function is to find out how it can connect the more important places in the district with one another, the more important towns or even the minor towns. The function of the taluk board is to see how it can connect the outlying villages to these roads which the district board has laid out. If there is any overlapping at all, it is only in the matter of sanitation or public health, preventive medicine. There, I can say, with the little experience I have of district boards, that they are doing very little. Most of the work is being done with the advice and under the guidance of the District Health Officer, who is now, I suppose to work, not under the control of the District Board President, but whose services are available to the villagers under the direction, guidance and co-operation of taluk board presidents. What little I had to do with public health as a district board president was to transmit the numberless diaries I used to get from health inspectors and from the health officer to the taluk board president and from the taluk board president back to the health officer. Village fairs and festivals and sanitation are items of work which the taluk board has to do and that is only where you can say there is any overlapping at all.

"The next point that arises is that if you are going to abolish taluk boards, I cannot agree with those who say that it is enough if we have one district board. If you want to have anything more than a sham local board administration, you need not only bifurcate the district board, but you should at least trifurcate it. I feel that if you are going to impose statutorily on the district board president the responsibility for carrying on the administration, you will be imposing on one human

2nd February 1934] [Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam]

being a task which will be impossible for even a superman to carry out. It will be impossible for one district board president at the headquarters of the district to look after or even acquaint himself with the needs of the outlying villages. I wonder whether, if even in bifurcated or trifurcated district boards, it will be possible for one district board president to satisfy the needs of the villages to the same extent to which taluk board presidents can. But anyway if you are going to abolish taluk boards, the district boards must automatically go and their places taken up by some other bodies, call them district boards or any other boards.

“Just a word about village panchayats. Succeeding as I do, Sir A. P. Patro, I feel a hesitation about giving expression to my views about village panchayats. He seems to have an inexhaustible faith in village panchayats. I know that from every platform we are being told that in good old ancient days we used to have very efficient and self-sufficing village panchayats, but owing to some reason, probably the advent of the British, all these good things were lost to us and that we may resuscitate them. Probably they were very good institutions, but what they have left to us? They have left to us very well laid out villages—laid out how? The dirtiest and the lowest portions of the village, the portions exposed to the floods and all the inclemencies of the weather, were left to the untouchables. If the river was in floods and the fields became flooded, that portion of the village occupied by the untouchables came first and foremost under water and all the Adi-Dravidas had to pack up what little they had and go to other portions of the village for three months in the year. Next in gradation came the Sudras. This community occupied portions of the village where the conditions were a little less severe. Then there was the agrapharam, most ideally situated in the most elevated portion of the village with pukka buildings with cattlesheds in the rear, to which in times of distress, in times of floods the Adi-Dravidas and Sudras can go and take shelter. That was the village system which we have inherited. I can only say that things to-day have not improved to such an extent that we have all become philanthropic, that a village panchayat constituted to look after the welfare of the village would so distribute its favours as to be impartial to the Depressed Classes, to the non-Brahman caste-Hindus and to the Brahmins. I know, Sir, with what little experience I have of the panchayats in the enlightened district of Tanjore, that the caste spirit there to-day is as dominant as it was ever before. To-day, if you entrust the affairs of the village to a panchayat you will find that the village communication begins from the main district board road stops at the entrance to the agrapharam. That would be the place nearest to the main street. If you want to go beyond that, you will have to wade through knee-deep water or through flooded fields and channels. When there is a heavy shower, the Adi-Dravidas have to vacate their quarters and take shelter in the quarters of the Sudras and then go from there to the cattle-sheds of the Brahmins. Now take village education. You will have a school opened no doubt in the

[Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam] [2nd February 1934]

village which on paper and according to the reports of educational officers will be open to all communities. But if you go there, you will find that the school is situated right in the centre of the aghraharam. Of course, the managers will say that anybody is welcome to the school. But I leave it to the House to judge whether the depressed classes will be able to go there.

12-45
p.m.

"A few words more, Sir, and I have finished. I want to say a few words about the standing committees suggested in the Bill in order to improve the efficiency of district boards which would otherwise be considered to be too unwieldy. What is the sort of standing committee that is proposed here? The standing committee of the district board will be constituted, not on its own initiative, but on the initiative of the Government. The Bill says that a local board shall, if so required by the Local Government, constitute standing committees. The initiative for the constitution of a standing committee is to emanate not from the local board itself but from the centralized Government. The purpose for which that standing committee is to be appointed is not to be decided by the local board but by the Government again. How is it to be constituted? Then the Bill further says that the Local Government may issue such directions as they think necessary or desirable in the case of any standing committee, the constitution of which is ordered by them under sub-section (1) in respect of the following matters. What shall be the number of members of the local board and the number who may be outsiders? Here again the direction has to come from the Local Government. The Government have to decide the persons who shall be members of the standing committee or the manner in which they shall be elected or appointed. We were under the impression that from the year 1930 this habit of nominating people to local bodies was wiped out once for all. Standing committees are to be constituted to which the local bodies have to delegate their powers for early disposal. That body is to be constituted not merely by people elected by the local body but also by persons appointed by the Government. The provision in the Bill is to the effect that the Local Government may issue directions as to the person who shall be the chairman of the standing committee or the manner in which he shall be elected or appointed. With all due respect to the hon. Member from Bellary who said that it would be possible to carry on the administration, I would submit that it would be impossible to carry on the administration with a standing committee constituted in this manner.

"Just one last word about the Educational Officer. You are going to appoint one Educational Officer to look after secondary education and elementary education. All that I can ask is this. What do you expect one officer to do in the field of education? Under the Act he is to be the manager of the schools; he has to do everything except to find funds. The district board is to find the funds and the District Educational Officer shall be the boss of the show. He is given absolute powers and he is to be a Government servant. I ask if, to-day, one

2nd February 1934] [Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam]

District Educational Officer with probably a dozen deputy inspectors of schools—altogether about 13 or 14 officers—is not able to visit every school once a year, what do you expect one educational officer for the whole district to do in the matter of spread of education, in the matter of supervising schools, in the matter of controlling education. These are all matters which, I think, require very deep consideration on the part of this House and I leave it at that.”

* Mr. E. CONRAN SMITH:—“ Mr. President, Sir, there are still several hon. Members desirous of speaking on this measure and I do not want to take up the time of the House. Indignation has forced me to take part in this debate; I wish to express very briefly my surprise and disappointment at so enlightened and experienced a gentleman as Mr. Ranganatha Mudaliyar being ignorant of the provisions of the Act. Section 6 (1) of the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, is to the following effect:—‘ There shall be constituted for each district a district board, for each taluk, a taluk board and for each village a panchayat.’ Another section has given the Government power in certain cases to amalgamate. That section obviously is intended to be used only in special cases and it requires the Government to obtain the sanction of the local bodies concerned when such action is taken. An hon. Member on the opposite side of the House speaking the other day said that the Government were driving a coach and four; I do not know through what . . . ”

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—“ On a matter of personal explanation, Sir, I did not say that the Government were driving a coach and four; I said that the hon. Minister was driving a coach and four over his party.”

Mr. E. CONRAN SMITH:—“ I beg the hon. Member's pardon. But the hon. Minister is now being asked to drive a coach and four through the Act passed by this Council in 1930.

“ I do not propose to deal with the speech of the Raja of Khallikote—I am sorry that the hon. Member is not now in the House—I will only say that I think he must have been speaking with his tongue in his cheek.”

* Mr. K. SINGAM AYYANGAR:—“ Sir, my practical experience before and after the amended Act of 1930 is that taluk boards have been looking satisfactorily after the needs of the rural population, such as spread of elementary education, rural medical relief and rural water-supply. Even after the amended Act of 1930 was passed, the Government did not deviate from the general principles or lines on which taluk boards have been working. The Government may agree to bring in smaller units so that they may have closer supervision over the rural needs. It is with that idea that the amended Act of 1930 was passed. But the Government did not at that time make any provisions,

[Mr. K. Singam Ayyangar] [2nd February 1934]

so that taluk boards and panchayat boards can go on with the administrative proposals in proper manner. No doubt factions existed between panchayats and taluk boards. They can be overcome by administrative proposals from the Government themselves instead of by a Bill which is against the principle laid down in the Act of 1930. My hon. Friend, Mr. Pannirselvam, has clearly told this House that practical changes would be necessary to remedy the existing defects instead of straightaway abolishing taluk boards. The abolition of taluk boards is not conducive to carrying out the proposals of the Government itself. The Government wants that rural population should be benefited more. They want more panchayats; they want closer units. I am not able to follow when they say that the abolition of these closer units should be done. The Government is at perfect liberty to bring forward some administrative proposals by which the existing defects might be overcome. That is the way to remedy and to remove the friction between the panchayats and the taluk boards, instead of having the district board or a central board to look after the needs of the rural areas. Till now the taluk boards have been looking after these things and they have been in close touch with the rural population and they should continue to do so hereafter also. To have more control over them and proper supervision over them, it is necessary that a board which have been in constant touch with them should be there and if there is anything found defective—in the matter of finance or other matters—they should be remedied by changes.

“ I have to make some suggestions with regard to the Village Development Fund. Under the amended Act of 1930, three pies contribution by the district board has been made compulsory. Six pies share has to be given over to the panchayats. The Village Development Fund is purely intended for the taluk board and panchayat areas for a variety of things like rural water-supply, etc. If the Government really find that some taluk boards which are closer units could not run the administration, they can as well ask the district board not to give the three pies share to the Village Development Fund. The six pies contribution can be used in villages—panchayat areas and in non-panchayat areas. Some solution of the problem should be found out and not the abolition of the taluk boards straightaway. I would request the hon. Minister to bring forward some administrative proposals to remove the financial difficulty but not to deviate from the general principles relating to the needs of the rural areas by abolishing taluk boards which are closer units.”

* Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasayo:—“ Sir, I find that most of the speeches are not relevant to the amendments and the motion before the House. First of all the question is whether there should be a committee of enquiry. So far as this point is concerned, no case has been made out at all. No such case has been made out by people saying that the information furnished by the Government is correct or not or sufficient or not. Nobody has stated that the information is either

2nd February 1934] [Sriman M. G. Patnaik Mahasayo]

incorrect or insufficient. So far as the two amendments are concerned, I think that no case has been made out and no facts have been substantiated in their favour. With regard to the main resolution . . . ”

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—“ I think the hon. Member cannot speak on the main motion. He said that all the remarks made so far on the main motion are irrelevant.”

* Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasayo:—“ With regard to the main motion, I think, speeches delivered so far did not say that the Bill is quite unnecessary. It might have been stated that the Bill is based on wrong principles and that there is no necessity for the amendment of the Act as proposed by the hon. the Chief Minister. It was stated that the Bill might be improved in several ways. If that is so, that matter can be looked into at the Select Committee stage. I do not think that all the details should be discussed now. The hon. the Chief Minister does not say that the Bill, as it is, should be accepted by the House just now. The Bill will of course be referred to the Select Committee. That is the motion now before the House. Therefore all we have to say at present is whether the Bill proceeds on good principles or not. In order to prove that point, the only question that has to be considered is whether there are really financial difficulties or not, and how those difficulties can be got over. That is the only point that we should address ourselves to. That was not done so far. On the other hand, hon. Members have been saying that the taluk boards should remain. These are matters of detail which need not be discussed on the floor of the House now . . . ”

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—“ The hon. Member is casting reflections on the Chair.”

At this stage the House adjourned for lunch.

After Lunch (3 p.m.)

III.—ELECTION OF TWO MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF INDUSTRIES,

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ I have to announce that the following candidates have been duly nominated for election to the Board of Industries:—

- (1) Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam.
- (2) Mr. V. T. Arasu.
- (3) Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai.
- (4) Mr. G. R. Premayya.
- (5) S. M. K. Beyabani Sahib Bahadur.

“ Of these, Messrs. Pannirselvam, G. R. Premayya and S. M. K. Beyabani have withdrawn their candidature. I therefore declare that the remaining candidates, viz., (1) Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai and (2) Mr. V. T. Arasu have been duly elected.”

[2nd February 1934]

II.—AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I have to inform the House that the following six gentlemen were nominated for election to the Select Committee to consider the amendments to Standing Orders:—

- (1) The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Mahomed Usman Sahib Bahadur.
- (2) Dr. P. Subbarayan.
- (3) The hon. the Raja of Bobbili.
- (4) The hon. Sir Hopetoun Stokes.
- (5) Mr. J. K. Metherell.
- (6) Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu.

"As the number of candidates nominated is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, namely, six, I hereby declare the above-mentioned Gentlemen to be duly elected under Regulation II (4) of the regulations for the holding of elections by means of the single transferable vote.

"Under Standing Order No. 80, the Deputy President and the Advocate-General are ex-officio members of the Select Committee, and I have to nominate a Chairman of the Council to serve on the Committee. I hereby nominate Mr. M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar as a member of the Committee."

IV.—A BILL TO AMEND THE MADRAS LOCAL BOARDS ACT, 1920, AND THE MADRAS ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT, 1920, FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES (BILL No. 2 OF 1934).

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Before we proceed with the discussion of the Bill, I wish to inform the House that there are several hon. Members who are anxious to speak on this Bill, and every hon. Member who is given a chance to speak must take as little time as he can, so as to accommodate those that follow and satisfy as many Members as possible who are anxious to speak."

Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasayo (continued):—"Sir, as I was saying this morning, the main objection to the motion made for referring this Bill to the Select Committee was, so far as I know, that the many questions involved in the Bill would not be allowed to be discussed in the Select Committee, if objection is not taken to certain provisions even at this stage. The first of them is, what is to become of the Village Development Fund? Of course that should not be subordinated to the general finances of the district board. That is the opinion that is held by some hon. Members. It is said that if the Bill goes to the Select Committee without any reservation being made for the discussion of that question by the Select Committee, Members will be precluded from raising that question in the Committee. If the hon. the Chief Minister

2nd February 1934] [Sriman M. G. Patnaik Mahasayo]

will now state that such questions may be discussed in the Committee, I think there can be no difficulty.

“The second question relates to finance. People still have to be satisfied on the point whether the abolition of the taluk boards would lead to any substantial retrenchment in the expenditure of the local bodies as a whole. That is a very important question; Government have of course given some materials, but I do not know if those materials are sufficient. If the Select Committee is satisfied that substantial savings can be made if the taluk boards are abolished, there will again be no further difficulty on this matter too.

“Then we come to the third important question, namely, the appointment of special officers, for instance, the educational officer for the management of elementary schools. The main point for decision is whether the district board will have to manage the schools or whether the management will have to be transferred to the district Educational Council. If that question also is allowed to be considered by the Committee, another objection that has been raised will be removed. Therefore, Sir, on these three important points I think the hon. the Chief Minister may make a statement that these questions will be left open for discussion by the Select Committee. If that is done, the amendments suggesting a circulation of the Bill or the appointment of a Committee of enquiry, may not be necessary at all.

“Another important factor that we have to bear in mind in reference to this subject is that no further taxation should be resorted to and no tolls should be restored, as was suggested by some of the presidents of district boards like Mr. Shetty or even by my Friend from Madras, Mr. Hameed Khan. These Gentlemen suggested that the taluk boards should be retained, even if it be necessary to re-impose the tolls. I strongly object to that. There should be no further taxation. People are hard hit on account of the fall in prices and the economic distress to such an extent that any further taxation will fall very heavily on them and will be an unbearable burden. Therefore, Sir, such a course should not be adopted. Short of that, anything might be done; whether the taluk boards are going to function for the time being as taluk boards or not, at least till better times come, some device may be adopted for carrying on the work. One such device was referred to by Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, i.e., representatives of panchayats can form themselves into committees and they, along with the presidents of local boards, can carry on the work. Some such device may be adopted to minimize the cost and at the same time to carry on the work effectively. In any case, Sir, further taxation should not be resorted to. These are the suggestions, Sir, which I wanted to make.”

* Mr. W. K. M. LANGLEY:—“Mr. President, Sir, on behalf of the European Group with which I am connected, I have great pleasure in strongly supporting the proposals which are contained in the Bill brought forward by the hon. the Chief Minister; and I do so with even

[Mr. W. K. M. Langley] [2nd February 1934]

greater pleasure because I firmly believe that these proposals, if carried out in a careful and practical manner, may prove to be more beneficial to local institutions in this Presidency, than probably any other measure in connexion with local self-government administration, that has been introduced during the life of the present Ministry. At the same time, Sir, I should like to congratulate the hon. the Chief Minister on his statesmanship and courage in bringing forward these proposals in the face, obviously, of very strong vested interests and in the face of strong and well-organized opposition. The principal reason why we support these proposals is that they will, in our opinion, simplify the local self-government administration of this Presidency. In the course of the debate, and especially in the course of the earlier speeches on the first day, I was expecting to hear some detailed discussion on the subject of panchayats, seeing that this Bill is in effect a proposal which I hope will have the effect of greatly improving the efficiency and the general working of the panchayats which I believe are bodies which have the strong support of everybody on both sides of this House. And yet, Sir, in speech after speech, I heard nothing but strong denunciations of the abolition of taluk boards; in other words, there was not a word said on the subject of how panchayats might be improved by this Bill; or how this Bill was going to affect the working of these panchayats at all. In fact, Sir, it was Sir A. P. Patro this morning who first really devoted some part of his remarks to the question of panchayats and the method by which this Bill may improve their position. It is not very frequently, Sir, that Sir A. P. Patro and myself entirely agree on any question that comes before this House; but on this occasion, I can only say that I am in complete agreement with Sir A. P. Patro. In fact, it would appear from the course of the debate, that we are the only two democrats in this House. I do quite seriously and honestly believe that if you create, either for good or for ill, more than 5,000 panchayats in the Province, and I presume this Bill will have the effect of creating more in due course, then it seems to me that it is most desirable that these panchayats should be got into proper working order at the earliest possible moment, so that, as Sir Patro remarked this morning, the local self-government administration of this Presidency may be based on a really sound and solid foundation, and the people themselves, i.e., the people actually in the villages, may be able to understand the rudiments of local self-government.

Now, Sir, the principal objection to this Bill at the earlier stages and particularly in the speeches of my Friends, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and Mr. Shetty, seemed to be on the financial question. My Friend, Mr. Venkatachalam Chetti in particular, introduced the bogey of the Motor Taxation Bill. I confess I really fail to see what connexion the Motor Taxation Bill or any other Bill which is purely a money Bill of that kind, has to do with these particular proposals. The Motor Taxation Bill was obviously a question of finance, and unfortunately the financial details had not been worked out as carefully as they might have been and so resulted in a great loss to the

2nd February 1934] [Mr. W. K. M. Langley]

local boards. But in respect of this particular Bill, who can say honestly that this Bill can possibly in any way add to the expenses of the local self-governing institutions in this Presidency? On the other hand, Sir, it seems to me clearly a mere matter of arithmetic to find out definitely that it must inevitably improve the finances of the local bodies.

“ The taluk boards, at any rate those with which I am acquainted, 3-15
are exceedingly top-heavy in regard to their expenditure and their P.m.
removal does not mean the removal of money spent on services to a very large extent, but a great saving of money spent on meetings and travelling expenses and all such superfluous expenses in the case of bodies working on a very small budget. I can see absolutely no ground for any fears on the subject of financial stringency, so that, in that respect, I for one am not going to be frightened by my hon. Friend, Mr. Venkatachalam Chetti, in his capacity as Bogey man.

“ Now, as regards the practical working of this Bill, there are one or two points on which I would like just to touch briefly. I do think that Government will have to be extremely careful in the working of these panchayats and see that they do not become homes of faction and that they are given every chance to carry on their work in a proper manner. In particular the most important point in that respect will be the method by which elections take place. I believe in many cases, at present, elections for panchayats are carried out by show of hands. That is an extremely dangerous system as, in the case of such bodies, it is obvious that this would lead to voting at the bidding of the majority party. Obviously also ordinary election by ballot would lead to great abuses in the early stages, such as impersonation and an enormous crop of election petitions. If you consider the number of 5,000 panchayats, the number of election petitions which might have to be tried would be very large. Therefore, I venture to suggest that selection of members to these panchayats should, if possible, be by nomination and that the power of recommending names should be given to Panchayat Inspection Officers and that such officers should be given extremely wide powers. They should not necessarily be told that they must in each place recommend so many of each community. For example, there is no reason why members of the depressed classes should be selected simply because of their being depressed.

“ As I have remarked at the beginning of my speech, I am afraid, the hon. the Chief Minister is faced with very severe attacks by vested interests in connexion with this Bill. I am afraid that is inevitable. I was reading a diary a few days back which was almost entirely devoted to the subject of Mr. Lloyd George, wherein it was noted that in the course of a conversation one day, Mr. Lloyd George remarked that whenever he came up against vested interests, it was exactly like cutting down some great tree which had outlived its usefulness which when it was cut down disclosed an enormous number of creatures which had been living under its protection. The hon. the Chief Minister must

[Mr. W. K. M. Langley] [2nd February 1934]

take his courage in his hands and I sincerely hope he will not be deterred in his duty by the opposition of any vested interest. I do not see why any taluk board president, or any members of taluk boards for that matter, should be allowed to stand in the way of what we believe this to be a measure for improving the local self-government administration."

* Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—"Mr. President, the hon. the Chief Minister when introducing this measure referred to past history and the steps taken with regard to local self-governing institutions in this province. I do not want to follow him in going back further than the year 1926. Hon. Members who were Members of the House in the year 1926 will remember that the then Chief Minister, who was in charge of local Self-Government—the late Raja of Panagal—introduced a measure to amend both the District Municipalities and the Local Boards Acts, providing for direct election to the district boards. But that measure did not go beyond the stage of introduction, because there was a change of Ministry at the end of 1926 and when the change of Ministry took place, I had the honour of holding the port-folio of Local Self-Government from the year 1926 to 1930. If hon. Members will remember, even though I took on myself the task of amending both those measures as public opinion demanded it, as over seven years had elapsed since Sir P. Rajagopalachari's original Local Boards Act of 1920 was passed, Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar who was then the Inspector of Local Boards drafted a measure in which he suggested that the taluk boards might go out altogether, that village panchayats might be the unit of Local Self-Government and that district boards might be the next step in the order of local self-governing institutions. That measure was considered and, as the hon. the Chief Minister mentioned, that measure was dropped for reasons that he did not know. I am in a position to give reasons why that measure was dropped. The fact was that as I was not conversant with the working of local bodies I consulted some of the most prominent district board presidents of the time including my hon. Friend, Mr. Pannirselvam, who was then the president of the Tanjore District Board. Most of the gentlemen who assembled at the time felt that it was too drastic a step to take, especially when there were not enough panchayats in the Presidency who would take care of the rural interests directly; and that was the reason why that Bill had to be dropped. I held also a conference of Members of the Legislative Council who had experience of local self-governing institutions including the present Minister for Education who was vehement in his opposition to the abolition of taluk boards. Evidently three years on the Treasury Bench have changed his mind, but I am glad to find that my hon. Friend, Diwan Bahadur Muniswami Nayudu, is still of the opinion that he held in the year 1928-29. The point he made in favour of the retention of taluk boards—I am glad to say he was the chief protagonist of the retention of taluk boards—I believe holds good to-day. His argument was that as there were not enough panchayats to look after rural interests, till a good number of panchayats were developed in localities to whom

2nd February 1934] [Dr. P. Subbarayan]

could be handed over elementary education, rural sanitation and rural communications, there should be an intermediary body between the district board and the panchayat board who would take care of such local interests. I found that argument valid and that was the reason why taluk boards were retained in the Bill which was introduced in the year 1930. They went further than that even. At the time, I had no intention of touching the taluk boards as they stood then, but both my hon. Friends, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu and the present Minister for Education, were saying that a single taluk board for every taluk would be a better way of solving the difficulty than retaining a big divisional taluk board for two taluks. (The hon. Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddiyar and Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu, were seen talking in low tone.) I think at least I heard the hon. the Minister for Education say he did not support it. I believe he did; and if my memory is wrong, he may correct me openly.

“ Mr. President, even if you look at institutions in England—my hon. Friend, Mr. Langley, thought that he and Sir Patro were the only democrats in this House and I am glad I do not find a place in this select body—even in England from which democratic country Mr. Langley hails, they have an institution called the Rural District Council which is a sort of intermediary body between the County Council and the Parish Council. The Rural District Council co-ordinates the work of the Parish Councils. Therefore, I do not think we shall be anti-democratic if we on this side of the House claim that the taluk board should be retained. Of course, hon. Gentlemen on the other side may ask ‘ What is your remedy for the present financial plight? ’ I admit the situation is bad, but at the same time, I would remind them that the situation is thus, not because of the existence of the taluk boards—because every institution including the Imperial Government finds itself in the position of working with deficits in its budget, and it is really due to the general economic depression in the world—not merely because taluk boards were created or institutions have been multiplied. The hon. the Chief Minister gave reasons and also stated that no doubt some of the employees of the taluk boards would be thrown out and in these days of unemployment it is certainly hard, but he proposes to take these people in by slow stages. My reply to that is that, even though he may be able to take them in, in course of time, still he will be throwing on the streets quite a large number of them without any employment at all and I think it is very hard luck on them because they expected when they were employed to these local self-governing institutions that they had some definite fixed appointments and it would be hard luck on them to be thrown out at a moment’s notice; and as my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu said, I think, the time has not come for the abolition of the taluk boards, because even during the last four years, I do not think panchayats have been organized in such a manner as to have them in all rural areas, so that the functions of the taluk boards could be easily transferred to them. The hon. the Chief Minister has no doubt provided

[Dr. P. Subbarayan]

[2nd February 1934]

for the bifurcation of district boards and thereby feels that he will decentralize the work of the district boards and that they will stand in the place of taluk boards in regard to elementary education and sanitation which really affect the rural people, who, instead of being attended to by a president who is near-by and who can be approached easily in taluk headquarters, will have to go to the presidents of district boards if the district Boards are bifurcated, before they can get anything done with regard to their rural wants. I feel, Mr. President, that perhaps if my hon. Friend Mr. Venkatachalam Chetti's motion is accepted, and if the hon. the Chief Minister will consider the proposals in a conference of those interested in the working of local self-governing institutions, we might find a method by which the present financial stringency might be got over.

3-30
p.m.

"As my hon. Friend Mr. Muniswami Nayudu further pointed out, there is also this danger, that is with regard to those members of the local bodies exceeding about 200 who were training a number of people belonging to the minority communities in the art of local self-government; when these institutions go, you will be really taking away from them these valuable lessons which they have an opportunity of learning. I, therefore, feel that is another argument for the retention of an intermediary body. I do not know, Mr. President, why the hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for Local Self-Government, Mr. Conran Smith, thought that my Friend, the Raja of Khallikote, talked with his tongue in his cheek. My hon. Friend has had large experience as president of the Ganjam District Board for the last twelve years, and I believe, he was giving us the benefit of his experience, and he feels that it is a wrong step to abolish the taluk boards. I feel the hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for Local Self-Government evidently was annoyed when the hon. Gentleman talked against his pet proposal of the abolition of taluk boards and that was perhaps the reason . . ."

MR. E. CONRAN SMITH:—"On a point of personal explanation, Sir. My position is not that."

DR. P. SUBBARAYAN:—"Whatever his explanation may be, the impression left on my mind is that. Mr. President, therefore I thought it ought to be the duty of every hon. Member of this House to consider deeply before he gives his vote on the question of the abolition of the taluk boards. I have no doubt, whatever, that Members coming from rural areas and knowing the wants of the rural areas will vote against their abolition not because their vested interests are being destroyed as it was pointed out, but because a valuable instrument of local self-government is abolished but because they feel that it is not a right step to take. I hope by their vote they would show that an intermediary board should remain in order to co-ordinate the work of the panchayats themselves."

* RAJA OF KHALLIKOTE:—"Mr. President, on a point of personal explanation. I was saying that the old taluk boards were really useful

2nd February 1934]

[Raja of Khallikote]

institutions. I was only trying to point out that the new taluk boards under the new Act are useless bodies as their finances are crippled and most of them have large deficits." (Here, hear.)

* Rao Sahib V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"Sir, this is a Bill of a far-reaching character and I think it is agitating the minds of those who have been in the various boards. For my part, Sir, I would like to confine myself to two important aspects connected with the provisions of this Bill touching the interests of the depressed classes. That is the education side, undertaken by taluk boards and representation of the depressed classes in taluk boards. The Bill of 1920 as amended in 1930, provides for compulsory reservation of seats in taluk boards for the depressed classes. Section 48 (2) clearly says that the circles shall return in addition to members for such reserved seats one or more members for non-reserved seats, and it is further made clear that the Local Government can determine the wards in which the seats reserved for Adi-Dravidas shall be set apart. If the taluk boards are abolished, the depressed classes and the other minority communities may or may not enjoy that amount of representation in the panchayats. I am afraid that we shall not have adequate representation in panchayats. In this connexion, my hon. Friends, Diwan Bahadur Muniswami Nayudu and Dr. Subbarayan, have clearly spoken about the representation of the depressed classes. But what I would urge on the Select Committee is that necessary provision must be made so that communities like the depressed classes may enjoy the same amount of representation in the panchayats. Taking the other aspect, so far as the matter of education of the depressed classes, is concerned. I feel that it is better that the taluk boards are replaced earlier. When my hon. Friend, Dr. Subbarayan, was the Chief Minister to the Government of Madras, he thought that the education of the depressed classes would be well served if it was in the hands of the local boards. The hon. the Home Member agreed to the proposal and a formal conference was held in which myself and Swami Sahajanandam opposed that view. But unfortunately, it was thrust on us and the education of the depressed classes was left in the hands of the local boards. Several hundreds of labour schools were taken away from the Labour Department and given to the taluk boards. There may be a few taluk boards in this Presidency that really encourage the education of the depressed classes. But, most of the taluk boards happen to be apathetic towards the education of the depressed classes. Teachers of my community were given a bad treatment and even the putting on of coats were found fault with by the members of the taluk boards. What is the result to-day? The education of the depressed classes has been shattered. Yesterday on reading the report of the Director of Public Instruction I clearly pointed out the scanty progress made in the education of depressed class girls. Education, so long as it was with the Labour Department, surely progressed. But when it went to the taluk boards, it greatly suffered. I hope the Select Committee will take proper steps so that the schools

[Mr. V. I. Muniswami Pillai] [2nd February 1934]

that were taken away from the Labour Department might be given back to that department and so that our education might not suffer. Going through the various reasons which made the hon. the Chief Minister to bring forward a Bill of this sort for the abolition of taluk boards, I think the most important one is the finances of the local bodies. Out of 208 taluk boards, even 90 are not able to balance their budgets. It clearly shows that at a time like this when district boards themselves are suffering in financial canker, it will not be advisable to allow subordinate boards to suffer this difficulty. From that point of view, it is a step in the right direction to bring this Bill for the abolition of the taluk boards. Sir, one other provision in this Bill provides for the creation of executive officers. When a Bill of a similar nature was brought before the House, for the introduction of executive officers in municipalities, myself and my hon. Friend, Mr. Davis, opposed the idea. But it was made compulsory on the part of the municipalities whose income exceeded 3 lakhs to accept commissioners. But what I would appeal to the Select Committee is that where the executive officers are not wanted by district boards necessary provisions should be made not to thrust such officers on those boards which are working satisfactorily. Sir, coming from the Nilgiris which is a district with no taluk boards, I may say for the information of the House that there will be no such agitation when the taluk boards are abolished. Two years ago, the Nilgiris District Board resolved to have taluk boards. But, thanks to Diwan Bahadur N. Gopalswami Ayyangar who then happened to be the inspector of local boards, he advised us to straightaway go to the creation of panchayats whereupon we have created several panchayats. As a member of the district board of the Nilgiris for over twelve years, I may tell you that the district board and the panchayats work in unison and real progress has been maintained so far the rural progress is concerned. With these few observations, I support the motion."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti may now reply."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"The Raja of Bobbili may first give his reply."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The difficulty will arise like this. If the Raja of Bobbili were to reply now and Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti were to reply afterwards, another opportunity may have to be given to the Raja of Bobbili for a further reply. To avoid that, I would advise this course."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"I do not object to the hon. the Raja of Bobbili having a double chance, Sir, unless you think it is rather inconvenient; so far as I am concerned, I will be very glad if he gets a double chance."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The difficulty is that the Raja of Bobbili will take 20 or 25 minutes and we want to have the voting at

2nd February 1934] [The President]

about 4-30. Then the names of members to the Select Committee will have to be moved and there will not be sufficient time."

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"You have introduced a debatable element as to whether it is necessary to go for voting at 4-30."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I thought that it was advisable to do so."

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"I do not know, Sir, if in matters of legislation, it should rest with a single Member of the House to say that you might help in coming to a decision at a particular time. I do not know the intention of the other hon. Members. So far as I am concerned, I am ready either way."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I am equally ready. What I wish to point out is that several hon. Members have felt it advisable that the discussion should come to a close this evening. That is why I want to so arrange the time as to finish this Bill by about 4-30 p.m."

Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"May I suggest that we have not yet had any Government reply?"

* The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, I wish first to deal with the speech of my hon. Friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, who moved an amendment to the effect that the consideration of the subject be deferred pending a report of an Enquiry Committee regarding the condition of the local bodies and its recommendations to improve and place them on a sound financial footing." 3-45 p.m.

"Recently, I find my hon. Friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, has been particularly developing the art of moving dilatory motions and indulging in personal attacks. I do not propose to follow his example. I shall confine my remarks to the subject-matter of the motion under discussion. We are all very much indebted to him for the long history of the origin of local bodies in this Presidency which he has given. But, I am afraid, he has not realized how much conditions have changed in this Presidency since 1880. He conveniently avoids the grounds on which the Government have come to the decision to abolish the taluk boards, the chief of which are that with the development of panchayats, the taluk boards are being rapidly deprived of both their income as well as their functions and that for the further healthy growth and development of Local Self-Government in this province, at the stage we have now reached, these intermediate boards which have really outlived their usefulness and which have now become a drag on the finances of all local bodies should go. It is therefore not surprising that the system which was good in 1880 cannot be an ideal one in the changed conditions of the present day. Then, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti goes on to make several sweeping statements, but does not accept the financial calculations of Government which are based on actual facts and figures and are not guess work. He has no faith in the conclusions

[Raja of Bobbili]

[2nd February 1934]

reached in the Secretariat and wants the Government to seek enlightenment from certain non-official sources which he does not mention. The Government proposals now embodied in the Bill with which we are dealing have been framed after the most careful consideration of the various alternatives available. I have had the benefit of the advice of experienced and responsible Government officials whose opinions are not colored by any political considerations and I have always had no hesitation in following their advice in preference to that of my hon. Friend and, as a Minister responsible to the electorate, I can claim to be in touch with public opinion; and I may state that I have no doubt whatsoever in thinking that my proposals have the support of a large body of public opinion in this province.

" Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti stated that he has recently travelled over certain roads which have been taken over by a district board from a certain taluk board. From this experience he made the sweeping statement that the standard of taluk board roads is much higher than those of district board roads throughout the Presidency. He feels there is corruption everywhere in Government departments, in district boards, and in municipalities, but that only the taluk boards are free from this defect. (Laughter.) Then he indulged in the statement that this Bill is intended to satisfy the district board presidents in my party and that I have chosen to introduce this measure simply because no taluk board presidents are sitting on this side of the House. I believe, Sir, it is not necessary for me to deal with these arguments of my hon. Friend which are far divorced from facts. I have read and re-read the transcript of his speech and I have failed to find any constructive proposals, except the simple remedy that the Government should make good the deficits of bankrupt boards. It has now become the fashion to say that Government should reduce taxation and increase their expenditure. An actual examination and scrutiny of the budgets of the local bodies have proved beyond dispute that a large majority of the taluk boards have got permanent deficits. But I am afraid, whatever I might say, my hon. Friend is determined not to be convinced (Ministerial laughter), as he seems to have come to the definite conclusion that Government calculations are always wrong.

" He then goes on to paint a gloomy picture of the fate of the large number of taluk board employees. I need not repeat here what I have stated in the opening portion of my speech in introducing this Bill that the question of the future prospects and well-being of the taluk board employees deserves the most sympathetic consideration of the Government and that they are framing proposals to safeguard the interests of these employees to the fullest extent possible. In this connexion, I think Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti mentioned that a certain taluk board employee has written to him a letter. I have received numerous such letters, but I did not think it would be necessary to make use of them. As, however, my hon. Friend has mentioned it, I shall read out

2nd February 1934]

[Raja of Bobbili]

a short extract from a memorial submitted to Government by the Local Board Employees' Provincial Association, Tanjore:—

'As people intimately connected with the administration of local boards, we have to express our sincere support to the measure which is proposed to be moved in the matter of the re-organization of local boards in this Province. Apart from its advantages to public interests, it would automatically result in the formation of district cadres which we have been agitating for through our association for the last twelve years and more.'

I think this will serve as an answer to the sweeping statements made by my hon. Friend.

'Other hon. Members also have spoken at length sympathizing with the future of these employees. I may say, Sir, Government yield place to none in their sympathy for the future of these employees; but as Government are for the time being responsible for the administration, in their view this is not the only question to be taken into consideration in coming to a decision on these matters.

'Now, coming to the remarks of my hon. Friend, Diwan Bahadur Muniswami Nayudu, whose authority to speak on problems of Local Self-Government I do not deny, and who, I am glad to acknowledge, has made a valuable contribution to this debate, I have carefully examined his criticism of the Government proposals and feel, subject to correction, that there are no fundamental differences between the two points of view. It appears to me to be possible to reconcile the two apparently conflicting views. I gather that his main objection is not to the abolition of the taluk boards, but that the Government proposals do not contain any scheme for co-ordinating the activities of the panchayats. I believe I am right in taking this view, because in his speech he goes on to make certain constructive proposals to attain these objects after the abolition of taluk boards. His idea, I believe, is to have a kind of federation or union of panchayats. It is no doubt true that the Government have discouraged in the past the formation of these unions for the simple reason that they did not wish to increase the existing hierarchy in the local bodies. With the abolition of taluk boards, conditions would have changed. I am sorry by an oversight I have omitted to mention in my opening speech that, in the new order of things, Government propose to constitute joint committees of panchayats for one or more revenue firkas to enable panchayats to embark on enterprises of common interest. Unless this proposal is given an extended trial, I am unable to commit Government to creating another kind of corporate local bodies with independent existence, financial resources and consequential expenditure on management and travelling allowances. It has not been found necessary to make any such provision in the present Bill, as the existing Act already empowers Government to create these committees. It will be a matter for decision in the Select Committee whether the three pies additional cess now proposed to be allotted to panchayats from the Village Development Fund should be allocated to these joint committees.

[Raja of Bobbili]

[2nd February 1934]

“As regards the abolition of the Village Development Fund and crediting the three pies cess in non-panchayat areas to district boards, my hon. Friend is doubtful whether the interests of the rural parts will receive due consideration at the hands of the district boards. It is but right to credit these sources of income to the district board which is enjoined with the duties of maintaining the third-class roads serving the villages, rural dispensaries and rural water-supply schemes. In other words, the district boards will be responsible for performing the duties and functions of taluk boards. Further, if this expedient is considered to be of doubtful wisdom, it is open to the Select Committee to devise a suitable safeguard that not less than three pies of the land-cess income of the district board should be spent on rural areas.

“In this connexion, I invite the attention of hon. Members to the new section 27-A (2) (b) of clause 11 which states the number who shall be members of local boards and the number who may be outsiders. The intention of this amendment is to enable representatives of panchayats to be co-opted as members of the standing committees of district boards. It will therefore be seen that the Government are alive to the necessity of giving effective representation to panchayats. The district boards through the standing committees will be able to do more effective work than what the taluk boards have been able to achieve in the past.

“My hon. Friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, wanted to know whether village panchayats exist in the United Provinces and how they are being worked. It is seen from the report on the working of the district boards in the United Provinces that there were 4,626 village authorities functioning in 1931-32. Thus the position will be the same as is now contemplated in the Government proposals. He has again expressed certain doubts as to the Government estimate of savings due to the abolition of taluk boards. Our figures are very conservative and the saving of 8.87 lakhs mentioned in the communiqué represents only 50 per cent of the expenditure of taluk boards on the general establishment of the existing taluk boards. We have not at all assumed that all the present expenditure of the taluk boards would be a saving to the district boards. If and when certain district boards are split up, it has been calculated that the extra establishment charges will be only 25 per cent more than now. It is thus not quite correct to say that on bifurcation the management charges would be doubled. I have also in this connexion to correct the impression that Government are taking power to bifurcate district boards. We are not doing anything of the sort now. The power to form a district board for any area is already there. Nor are we introducing any separate provision for compulsory bifurcation of all district boards. There is therefore no cause for any alarm that the Government are carrying out any hasty experiment. We have stated in the clearest terms that no district board would be bifurcated unless the separated boards are found to be financially self-supporting. I may also state that there is a Government Order which lays down that the cost of establishment should not exceed 3 per cent of the general revenues and we propose to strictly enforce this rule.

2nd February 1934] [Raja of Bobbili]

"It will therefore be seen that there is no possibility of any establishment charges being doubled or even considerably increased in case it is found necessary to bifurcate district boards. As regards the other statement, that the provision of one district board engineer will double the cost of the engineering establishment, I have given the explanation already on the floor of this House; but in case I have not made the point clear, I wish to refer to the subject again. The work of the district board engineer will naturally be considerably reduced as a result of the splitting up of the district board, and he may be safely placed in charge of a small headquarters subdivision, in addition to his normal duties of supervision. An assistant engineer, on the average, now costs Rs. 15,000 with his establishment to the district board per annum, and it will be possible for each of the split up district boards to do away with one assistant engineer. The average pay of the district board engineers under the revised scale is Rs. 556. The scale of pay of assistant engineers vary with each district, but may be roughly taken as Rs. 300. The two split up boards will thus save Rs. 600 among themselves, but they have to pay a contribution of Rs. 556 towards the district board engineer. Therefore it may safely be assumed that there would be no additional cost either to the Government or to the district board as a result of this item. The work of the district health officers can be co-ordinated by the Director of Public Health, and we therefore do not propose to increase their number. As regards additional district panchayat officers, perhaps many hon. Members are not aware that many district boards employ numerous other officers to do the same work under different names, such as, assistant panchayat officers, panchayat supervisors and rural reconstruction officers. Even now some district boards have got four to six of these officers, and I believe, the North Arcot district has got one for each taluk. It will thus be seen that the Government proposals are not extravagant in this respect. Travelling allowance of presidents and members, etc., would not be more than what it is now, if district boards are split up. With smaller areas to be covered, smaller sums would be required for travelling allowance charges for individual presidents and members.

"I believe I have satisfactorily met the objections raised that the splitting up of the district boards would result in doubling the management charges. Nor do the Government proposals contemplate immediate splitting up of all district boards. I may also state that, according to the report of the special officer, there is scope for economy in the district boards by standardizing the establishment and scales of pay and reducing superfluous posts, especially in the district board engineer's offices by combining his office with that of the district board office.

"Now coming to the question of District Educational Officers, here again, in spite of my explanation the other day, some people are still

[Raja of Bobbili]

[2nd February 1934]

entertaining doubts; and I wish once more to state that by this amending Bill, Government have no intention whatsoever of taking over the management and control of those schools from district boards. It is definitely and clearly intended that the District Educational Officers will be the servants of the district boards, and that their whole work will be under the control of the district boards. If other ways could be found of more economically managing the elementary and secondary schools, then there will be no necessity at all to appoint District Educational Officers to district boards.

“Turning now to the suggestions of Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, I am afraid his proposals cannot be accepted. Handing over elementary education to the district educational councils would mean the creation of a parallel body to the district board with executive functions with the resultant expenditure on establishment and travelling allowances. Moreover it stands to reason that the authority which finds the money should also have the right to decide how and where it should be spent.

“As to the taking over of the remaining hospitals by the Government, I must say that it would mean a very large commitment on Provincial revenues which cannot be thought of at the present juncture. The natural consequence of the policy of developing panchayats has now resulted in the necessity to abolish taluk boards altogether.

“In this connexion reference has been made by several speakers, more especially by my Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, that the taluk boards are suffering, just like any other institution, owing to the general world-wide financial depression, and so it is not desirable to carry out such a sweeping change, simply because taluk boards are in temporary financial difficulties. I might state for the information of my hon. Friend, that so far as the total receipts of the taluk boards are concerned, there has been no reduction, or at least no substantial reduction, either by the Amending Act of 1930, or by the coming into force of the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, or by the present financial depression. I might say, within a margin of 5 per cent, the income of the various taluk boards remains the same. None of the hon. Members have met my argument. It is but natural that when more panchayats are created, you will be automatically reducing the income of taluk boards. One of the reasons for the present financial difficulty is the increase in the number of panchayats, and another reason is the abnormal fall in tolls which have been abolished under the Act. It has naturally increased the establishment charges to a great extent, and leaves nearly 108 taluk boards little or no money to provide for any return to the tax-payer by way of public amenities. It will therefore seem that we are doing this as an expedient to get over the temporary difficulty. But as a matter of fact this will be a permanent financial difficulty. Of course it is very simple to suggest

2nd February 1934]

[Raja of Bobbili]

that Government should make good the financial deficit. I shall read some of the grants which local bodies have been receiving from Government during the years from 1927 to 1932—

					LAKHS.
1927-28	District boards	...	...	...	59
1928-29	Do.	...	...	...	55
1929-30	Do.	...	...	...	66
1930-31	Do.	...	...	...	91
1931-32	Do.	...	...	...	75

“ Then with regard to the taluk boards the following figures will show the amount of grant received :—

					LAKHS.
1927-28	Taluk boards	...	...	...	63
1928-29	Do.	...	...	...	69
1929-30	Do.	...	...	...	73
1930-31	Do.	...	...	...	75
1931-32	Do.	...	...	...	73

“ It will thus be seen that Government have not neglected the interests of the taluk boards. But the main fact still remains, whether the money is raised directly by taluk boards, or whether it comes from Provincial revenues, it is the general tax-payer who has to foot the bill. I cannot therefore subscribe myself to the proposition that taluk boards should be maintained, to serve as training grounds for people in the art of local self-government and on that ground alone. Experience has shown that the existence of numerous local bodies with regional authority does not necessarily result in developing the civic sense. I fail to see how it is undemocratic and retrograde if we have one local board of manageable dimensions to do the work of several taluk boards. Although there are brilliant exceptions, the administration of the taluk boards is not up to the mark, and district boards could certainly administer the public services more efficiently and economically by pooling the resources and by employing better qualified staff. Moreover there is no service now performed by a taluk board which cannot be taken over by a district board or by a panchayat. The duplication of control and overlapping of responsibilities cause a pitiable waste of public funds. Government have a higher duty to the tax-payer to perform than maintaining bankrupt local boards. The mover of the amendment has, I believe, not realized the gravity of the present financial position. When all the materials and data one could possibly gather are available to the Government, are we to allow the administration of local self-government to break down, pending the appointment of a committee to gather facts and figures, which are already there, and submit a report? This is a matter eminently for Government to undertake, and it is for the Select Committee, which is

[Raja of Bobbili]

[2nd February 1934]

fully representative of all sides of the House, to come to final conclusions without further loss of time. I am not unaware that we are going against the wishes of certain vested interests, created by the Act of 1930, and I also realize that I am displeasing a certain number of my political friends, whose influence in the country cannot be ignored, but I am fortified in the decisions I have taken by the knowledge that the Government are not a minute too late in bringing forward these legislative proposals. It is a matter of public knowledge that the Press has generally welcomed these proposals, and that a large body of public opinion is behind me. I have received numerous letters from eminent people who are qualified to speak on the subject and who have no axe of their own to grind, stating that this is a reform in the right direction. I take the fullest responsibility for these proposals, and I am prepared to face the electorate with the utmost confidence, for I feel convinced, that, although I may cause ruffled feelings in certain quarters momentarily, the country will ultimately realize that this is a step in the right direction. (Cheers.)

"I have therefore to oppose the two dilatory amendments before the House in the confidence and belief that I will get the support and co-operation of all sides of this House in the various stages of this important measure."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"Mr. President, Sir, we have listened to a very bold speech, the courage of which remains to be tested in due course.

"I should like at the very outset to disabuse the mind of the hon. the Chief Minister with regard to my position in this matter. Sir, he has accused me of trying to indulge in dilatory tactics and also in personal attacks. With regard to the first charge, it is easy for the hon. Chief Minister to think so, because it is easy, Sir, that every counsel of wisdom is likely to be misunderstood in that way. I suppose the hon. Minister will admit that I have absolutely no vested interest to be injured by the abolition of the taluk boards. Therefore, if I supported the motion for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the condition of these local bodies with a view to set them up on a better footing, it was not with an intention to obstruct the passage of a Bill on which he seems to have set his heart but only with the view that in the re-arrangement of self-governing institutions of this Presidency, others interested in that branch of political training also must have some share. I hope in so far as that part is concerned, I have attempted to convince him of my anxiety and motive in that matter.

"With regard to The question of personal attack, there again I have got to say that I am thoroughly misunderstood. Sir, I love the English language and the English constitution for two reasons. The reason why I love the English language I need not say. So far as the English constitution is concerned, I like it because that constitution allows the most recriminating attacks across the

2nd February 1934] [Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti]

table and yet leaves no malicious impression in the minds of those who exchange hot words against each other. If the way in which I used English language had been responsible for any misunderstanding that I was making a personal attack against the hon. the Chief Minister or for that matter on any hon. Member of this House, I can only say that I have got to get my language trimmed in such a way as it might appear genial, as it had been done by my hon. Friend, Mr. Smith, this morning (laughter). With this preliminary remark I may now go into the question of the abolition of taluk boards. I feel that it must have struck rather significant not only on the attention of the hon. the Chief Minister but also on the attention of Mr. Langley that those who have spoken from behind the Government Benches have rather spoken against the Bill. Mr. Muniswami Pillai in whose district there are no taluk boards for abolition spoke in favour of the Bill. Of course my hon. Friend, Mr. Langley, knows that his vested interests will not in any way be affected either by the abolition or by the retention of these boards. It is rather uncharitable for these gentlemen to suggest that those who opposed the abolition of taluk boards have vested interests. Is it suggested that those who spoke against the Bill are speaking so because the seats which they occupy will fall vacant on account of the abolition of these boards, and that these birds will have to seek shelter elsewhere because they will get displaced? It is really uncharitable to make any such suggestion against us. That suggestion, if properly understood, would convince anybody that every member of a local body, either a taluk board or a district board, can only argue from the point of view of his vested interests. But I ask whether it is right for district board presidents to allow any such insinuations against themselves. My hon. Friend, the Chief Minister said that, except making some sweeping suggestions here and there my remarks were not borne out by facts and figures, and that I did not speak anything constructive in my speech. It is exactly for that reason that I want the aid of a committee such as is suggested in the motion proposed by us. It is easy for the hon. Minister, being in the Secretariat, to place facts and figures which can be interpreted in any manner he wants. But those who are sitting in the opposition and who have no facts and figures, can draw their own conclusions as to the correctness or otherwise of the facts and figures placed before them by the Government. How then it happens that even my hon. Friend who has been the president of a district board for a number of years should agree with us in thinking that the taluk boards should not be abolished, although he may not vote with us. What I am anxious to point out is that, whatever may be the arguments used and the constructive suggestions put forward by Members sitting on this side of the House, that is not going to persuade Members sitting on the Treasury Bench to vote with us. What I am appealing to my hon. Friends on the other side is that it should not be considered as a party measure, and that in putting forward these arguments we are

[Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti] [2nd February 1934]

not in any way actuated by selfish motives. I do not know if the hon. the Chief Minister has bestowed any thought on the suggestion that we made that the financial considerations do not peculiarly apply to local boards alone but they apply to district boards also. Sir, I wish to draw the attention of this House to the remarkable passages of the Special Officer where he makes scathing indictments against the financial condition of the district boards and still that point has been entirely ignored by the hon. the Chief Minister. Much has been made of the suggestion I have made, viz., that Government must come to the rescue of these local boards. It is exactly here that I and the hon. the Chief Minister come to the parting of the ways. I consider that it is the essential duty of the Government to attend to the dangerous situation created by the local boards and rectify any mistakes which they might have committed and see that these boards discharge their duties more carefully and more efficiently. Supposing after the passing of this Act, people do not come up to the standard which the Government expect them to come in the matter of administering local self-governing institutions, will it be right to say that, because these institutions did not avail themselves of the opportunity afforded to them, their needs should not be looked into? That is the argument which the hon. the Chief Minister has failed to meet. He seems to be confident that by the abolition of the taluk boards and the re-organization of the district boards either by doubling them or by creating two for three districts he can save the situation. What he seems to think is that the Government by a mistake have gone wrong in their calculation in thinking that these boards would function efficiently and when once it is known and when Government want to rectify that mistake, it is not proper on the part of the Opposition to interfere with their decision. Even in this matter the Government are far more optimistic than what the circumstances warrant.

“I have only to answer to one or two points raised by my hon. Friend, Mr. Langley. He said that ‘so far as I have heard the earlier speeches nobody said there was any fear for panchayats.’ At the time when my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, spoke probably my hon. Friend, Mr. Langley, was not present in the House. Nobody dealt with panchayats more lucidly and more exhaustively than my hon. Friend and his authority to speak on Local Self-Government Department is even admitted by the hon. the Chief Minister. This is what my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, said:—

‘If we examine the position, what do we find? This Bill does not provide for a better machinery for the purpose of helping the panchayats themselves. There is a passage in the Government communiqué which is printed along with the Bill. It is stated that it is generally agreed that the village panchayat should be developed as the unit of Local Self-Government. We must thank the hon. the Chief Minister for this. The Government now feel that they have neglected this institution for a very long time. Taluk boards are expected to develop the panchayats. But in actual practice they are opposed to each other and experience has shown that the present system has not been conducive to the

2nd February 1934] [Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti]

healthy development of village panchayats. The reasons are not given why the taluk boards have failed in this matter. Is it because they are incompetent to do the work? Is it because the funds are not utilized well? I will explain to the House the reason. There is a provision in the Bill that, wherever a panchayat is constituted, a portion of the land-cess will go to it and the balance only to the taluk boards. The result is that taluk boards are not anxious to encourage the formation and growth of panchayats. That is the reason why the panchayats are not encouraged by the taluk boards. I would like to ask the hon. the Chief Minister how he has improved the position and what he has done."

Mr. W. K. M. LANGLEY:—"May I venture to point out, Sir, that I was in the House during the whole speech of my hon. Friend Mr. Muniswami Nayudu; so it hardly seems necessary for my hon. Friend to read the speech out a second time."

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"But he said that he came to the conclusion that so far as the earlier part of the speech was concerned there was no reference to panchayats. I should think there is something wrong somewhere. Sir, I wish only to refer to one or two minor points which have been referred to by the hon. the Chief Minister. He said that public opinion is entirely with him. I am afraid, whatever might have been the inference which he has drawn from the current of public opinion, in so far as those gentlemen who are said to represent public opinion are concerned, they are decidedly not in his favour except in voting. Even such a conservative Member as the Raja of Khallikote was not in his favour. The hon. the Chief Minister thought that I was making rather a hasty remark by my experience of a particular road in the Venkatagiri area and that the condition of roads in other parts of the Presidency is not so bad. I was only mentioning it as an illustration of lack of facilities in particular localities. If certain institutions are placed at very long distances from areas which these institutions serve, then the attention which these areas are entitled to becomes very meagre. It was with a view to see that there must be a local institution of the Local Self-Government Department to attend to local requirements that I said that taluk boards should be placed on a better footing. I can only repeat that I have absolutely no idea of employing obstructive tactics. The only thing that we have to see is that we should have before us all facts and figures before we pass any such measure and that we should not be accused of hastiness in the matter of legislation which affects the whole organization of the Local Self-Government Department."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will put the two motions (1) of Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and (2) of Mr. Basheer Ahmed to the vote of the House."

"The first question is 'that the consideration of the Madras Local Boards Act (Amending) Bill be deferred pending a report of an Enquiry Committee of the condition of the local bodies and the recommendations to improve and place them on a sound financial footing'. The motion was declared lost."

[2nd February 1934]

A poll was demanded and the House divided thus:

Ayes.

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| 1 Dr. P. Subbarayan. | 17 Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu. |
| 2 Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Ayyar. | 18 Mr. K. P. Raman Menon. |
| 3 " T. C. Srinivasa Ayyangar. | 19 Diwan Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar. |
| 4 " Sami Venkatachalam Chetti. | 20 Mr. M. S. Sreshta. |
| 5 " A. Pl. N. V. Nadimuthu Pillai. | 21 " P. V. Krishnayya Choudari. |
| 6 " V. T. Arasu. | 22 Zamindar of Chemudu. |
| 7 " A. B. Shetty. | 23 Mr. C. Indrayya. |
| 8 Rao Bahadur P. C. Muthu Chettiyar. | 24 " Mr. J. Kuppuswami Choudari. |
| 9 " Abdul Hameed Khan. | 25 " Mahaboob Ali Baig. |
| 10 " U. C. Subrahmanya Bhatt. | 26 " G. R. Premayya. |
| 11 " K. P. V. S. Muhammad Meera Ravuttar. | 27 " K. Pattabhiramayya. |
| 12 " K. A. Nachiyappa Gounder. | 28 " P. M. Thangal. |
| 13 " K. S. Sivasubrahmanya Ayyar. | 29 Rao Bahadur R. K. Venugopal Nayudu. |
| 14 " P. Peddi Raju. | |
| 15 " K. Singam Ayyangar. | |
| 16 Khan Bahadur P. Khalif-ul-lah Sahib Bahadur. | |

Noes.

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|--|---|
| 1 The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Mahomed Usman. | 31 Mr. G. Sriramulu. |
| 2 " Diwan Bahadur Sir M. Krishnan Nayar. | 32 " P. C. Moses. |
| 3 " Sir Archibald Campbell. | 33 " P. V. Rajagopal Pillai. |
| 4 " Sir Hopetoun Stokes. | 34 " V. G. Vasudeva Pillai. |
| 5 " Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddiyar. | 35 " W. P. A. Soundara Pandiyan. |
| 6 " Mr. P. T. Rajan. | 36 " P. Bayappa Reddi. |
| 7 " the Raja of Bobbili. | 37 " A. McG. C. Tampoe. |
| 8 Rao Bahadur G. Jagannatha Raju. | 38 Khan Bahadur T. M. Moidoo Sahib Bahadur. |
| 9 Mrs. K. Alamelumangathayaramma. | 39 Mr. P. K. Ramachandra Pada-yachi. |
| 10 Diwan Bahadur V. N. Viswanath Rao. | 40 " G. Lakshmana Reddi. |
| 11 Mr. J. A. Thorne. | 41 Rao Sahib V. Dharmalingam Pillai. |
| 12 " H. M. Hood. | 42 Kumararaja of Venkatagiri. |
| 13 Diwan Bahadur N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar. | 43 Raja of Khallikote. |
| 14 Mr. R. Madanagopal Nayudu. | 44 Zamindar of Mirzapuram. |
| 15 " E. Conran Smith. | 45 Mr. M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar. |
| 16 " T. Sundararao Nayudu. | 46 " A. V. Bhanoji Rao. |
| 17 Khan Sahib Syed Tajuddin Sahib Bahadur. | 47 " K. M. Doraiswami Reddiyar. |
| 18 Mr. M. D. T. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. | 48 " Daniel Thomas. |
| 19 " V. M. Ramaswami Mudaliyar. | 49 Swami A. S. Sahajanandam. |
| 20 " T. Narasa Reddi. | 50 Mr. H. M. Jagannetham. |
| 21 Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam. | 51 Rao Bahadur D. Krishnamurti. |
| 22 Mr. K. C. M. Venkatachala Reddiyar. | 52 Rao Bahadur P. Subrahmanyam Chetti. |
| 23 " G. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. | 53 Mr. S. A. A. Annamalai Chettiyar. |
| 24 " M. Devadasan. | 54 Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai. |
| 25 Rao Sahib N. Siva Raj. | 55 Rao Sahib D. V. Narasimhaswami. |
| 26 Subadar Major S. A. Nanjappa Bahadur. | 56 Rao Sahib Pandit Ganala Ramamurti. |
| 27 Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan. | 57 Mr. A. Harischandrudu. |
| 28 Rao Sahib V. I. Muniswami Pillai. | 58 " K. Kesavaramamurti Nayudu. |
| 29 Mr. M. Vedachala Mudaliyar. | 59 " S. M. K. Beyabani. |
| 30 " B. P. Sessa Reddi. | 60 " A. Ramakrishna Reddi. |
| | 61 " A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. |
| | 62 " C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar. |
| | 63 " K. Koti Reddi. |
| | 64 Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro. |
| | 65 Rao Bahadur C. Natesa Mudaliyar. |

2nd February 1934]

Noes—cont.

66 Raja of Parlakimedi.	72 Mr. J. K. Metherell.
67 Mr. M. B. Rangaswami Reddi.	73 „ W. K. M. Langley.
68 Diwan Bahadur S. Ellappa Chetti- tiyar.	74 „ W. W. Ladden.
69 Mr. C. Basu Dev.	75 „ R. Foulkes.
70 „ R. M. Palat.	76 Rao Bahadur T. M. Narayanaswami Pillai.
71 „ F. Birley.	77 Mr. G. Simhachalam Pantulu.

Neutral.

1 Mr. C. Krishnan.

2 Mr. M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar.

Ayes 29. Noes 77. Neutral 2.

The motion was lost.

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ The second question is that ‘ the Bill be circulated for public opinion and that such opinion when obtained shall be placed before the House with the remarks of the Government thereon ’.

The motion was lost.

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ The second question is that ‘ the Bill to amend the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, and the Madras Elementary Education Act, 1920, for certain purposes (Bill No. 2 of 1934), be referred to a Select Committee, that the following Members do constitute the Select Committee and that Standing Order No. 39 (2) be suspended ’:—

- (1) The Kumararaja of Venkatagiri.
- (2) Mr. W. K. M. Langley.
- (3) Mr. P. Bayappa Reddi.
- (4) Rao Sahib N. Siva Raj.
- (5) Raja of Khallikote.
- (6) Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai.
- (7) Mr. M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar.
- (8) Rao Bahadur G. Jagannatha Raju.
- (9) Mr. M. B. Rangaswami Reddi.
- (10) Mr. V. P. Narayanan Nambiyar.
- (11) Rao Sahib C. Jayaram Nayudu.
- (12) Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.
- (13) Mr. R. M. Palat.
- (14) Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu.
- (15) Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari.
- (16) Diwan Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar.
- (17) Mr. T. C. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
- (18) Dr. P. Subbarayan.
- (19) Khan Bahadur Mahmud Schamnad Sahib Bahadur.
- (20) Pattagar of Palayakottai.
- (21) Mr. A. B. Shetty.
- (22) Khan Bahadur Yahya Ali Sahib Bahadur.
- (23) Mr. A. McG. C. Tampoe.
- (24) Mr. E. Conran Smith.
- (25) Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam.
- (26) Rao Bahadur T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar.

[The President]

[2nd February 1934]

- (27) Rao Bahadur C. Natesa Mudaliyar.
- (28) Diwan Bahadur S. Ellappa Chettiyar.
- (29) Mr. V. M. Ramaswami Mudaliyar.
- (30) Sriman M. G. Patnaik Mahasayo.
- (31) Mr. P. Peddi Raju.
- (32) Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro.
- (33) Khan Sahib Syed Tajuddin Sahib Bahadur.
- (34) Mr. G. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.
- (35) Mr. P. K. Ramachandra Padayachi.
- (36) Mr. A. Pl. N. V. Nadimuthu Pillai.
- (37) Mr. M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar.
- (38) Diwan Bahadur M. Gopalaswami Mudaliyar.
- (39) Mr. K. Koti Reddi.
- (40) Rao Sahib V. I. Muniswami Pillai.
- (41) Basheer Ahmed Sayeed Sahib Bahadur.
- (42) The hon. the Raja of Bobbili (the Mover)."

The motion was carried.

Mr. G. R. PREMAYYA:—" Mr. President, I understand that Moses's Bill also is going to be referred to the same Select Committee. I therefore propose that his name also may be added to the list."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—" It is too late."

Mr. G. SIMHACHALAM PANTULU:—" Mr. President, Sir, in view of the statement made by the hon. the Chief Minister, I do not wish to press my amendment *."

* Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—" Mr. President, Sir, I move—

' that it be an instruction to the Select Committee—

- " (1) to consider the desirability of retaining intermediary boards in some form; and*
- (2) also to consider the question of vesting the executive powers of the district board in an executive officer as has been done with regard to district municipalities "'*

" Sir, few words are needed from me to commend this motion to the acceptance of the House. I take it that the hon. the Chief Minister himself does feel that there is some necessity for intermediary boards although he has not made up his mind as to whether it should be a joint committee composed of members of panchayats and members of district boards or some other institution. I only want that power should be vested in the Select Committee to consider this question, so that if, after consideration, they feel that some intermediate boards are necessary, they may not be prevented from making suitable amendments.

* Mr. G. SIMHACHALAM PANTULU will move:—

" That it be an instruction to the Select Committee to consider the possibility—

- (i) for re-amalgamating the recently reconstituted taluk boards,
- (ii) decreasing the number of newly constituted village panchayat boards.
- (iii) entrusting the District Educational Councils with Elementary education and with necessary modifications."

2nd February 1934] [Dr. P. Subbarayan]

“As regards the second point, my hon. Friend, Diwan Bahadur Muniswami Nayudu, has already referred to it at length in his speech on the introduction of the Bill. Both he and I feel that it is necessary to have powers vested in such executive officers in the same way as it has been done with regard to district municipalities. As the provisions contained in the Bill, as it stands, do not vest such powers in executive officers, those who may be appointed by the Government would only be glorified secretaries to the district board. As the Government have already approved of the principle that executive officers should have real power in the case of district municipalities, I hope the hon. the Chief Minister will have no difficulty in accepting this recommendation to the Select Committee, as I believe his intention when he introduced this measure was that such powers should vest in executive officers and they should have the same functions with regard to district boards as executive officers now exercise with regard to the municipalities to which they have been appointed.

“Before I sit down, Mr. President, I hope you will allow me to make a personal explanation with regard to what the Raja of Khallikote said. I said I was reminded of the old proverb that there are some people in the world who cannot be defended against themselves. I never ought to have defended him. My hon. Friend does not want to be defended and I do not propose to defend him. He evidently wanted to show his wrath on me with regard to the new taluk boards.”

RAJA OF KHALLIKOTE:—“Not on you.”

Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—“Then perhaps he wants to throw the blame on Mr. Conran Smith who is not here and as I am bodily present, he wants to let me alone. Anyhow, I thank my hon. Friend, the Raja of Khallikote, and I shall not rush in to defend anybody who is not prepared to be defended.”

Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—“I second it. As I understand the speech of the hon. the Chief Minister, I think he will be prepared to have these questions discussed in the Select Committee. If the Select Committee does not agree with any of these points, then there will be no difficulty at all. But if the Select Committee, after examining these questions, comes to the conclusion that some provisions are necessary in the Bill to give effect to those points, the Council will be precluded from giving effect to the desire of the Select Committee. It is with a view to remove that difficulty that it is now proposed to give these instructions to the Select Committee.”

Mr. K. KOTI REDDI:—“Mr. President, if I voted against Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti's amendment and voted in favour of the motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, it was because, though I was not convinced that there would be much of a financial saving as a result of the abolition of taluk boards, I thought that the time had come when there was no necessity to maintain intermediate bodies like the taluk boards between district boards and panchayats. With regard to the

[Mr. K. Koti Reddi] [2nd February 1934]

development of panchayats and their extension, many misapprehensions have been expressed in this Council. It has been said that panchayats are torn with factions and under the present circumstances it will not be desirable to develop and extend them. Although I am one of those who think that radical reforms should be made in the elections to panchayats by the introduction of single member constituencies and so on, and that unless those reforms are made, the factions are bound to increase, still, I believe that the time has come when an attempt ought to be made to develop the panchayats and increase their number.

4-45
p.m.

“ Another consideration which prompted me to vote in favour of the motion of the hon. the Chief Minister is the desirability of having an executive officer. I would express my feelings of gratitude to those honorary men like the presidents of taluk boards and of district boards and of the panchayat boards, for the honorary work they have done so far and which they are willing to do still. A state of affairs with regard to the administration of local boards has come into existence which requires a radical change in the administration of the Local Self-Governing bodies. There are many honest and sincere presidents of these local bodies who are finding it very difficult to administer the affairs of local bodies to their own satisfaction and in the best interests of the local bodies themselves. There are many matters in which the discretion of the presidents of local bodies is bound to be influenced by various considerations in very undesirable channels. It is not the fault of the presidents. There will be many bad presidents of local bodies; there are a few of them who are not above pecuniary or other sordid considerations in the administration of local bodies. At the same time one has to admit that there are a number of presidents of local bodies who are really honest and who carry on the administration of these local bodies honestly and sincerely. Somehow or other, dishonest presidents seem to be getting on very well. One of the directions in which I have been advocating reform in connexion with this matter is this; I am very intimately acquainted with the affairs of one board though I am not on the board. That one instance is enough to convince me that some radical change is necessary in the administration of local boards. If some members enter into these local bodies, it is more with a view to secure some contract or other and nothing else. What would the poor president do? Unless he gives contracts to these members, he has always the fear of a no-confidence motion being brought against him. He has to undergo a lot of difficulty in allotting these contracts between the various members of his own party. I am not blaming the poor district board presidents. On the other hand, I am sympathizing with the position of the honest district board presidents and trying to help them. On account of the discretion that is vested in the president, he is bound to exercise it in favour of one or other member of his party. When he exercises his discretion in favour of one member of his party, the other members of the party misunderstand him. Each member of

2nd February 1934]

[Mr. K. Koti Reddi]

the party thinks that he has not got as many contracts as another member of the party, and he is dissatisfied. Some time ago, I sent a memorandum on this subject to the Government. I did not publish it in the papers; I do not believe much in publicity. I sent my memorandum to my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, when he was Chief Minister. I do not know what consideration the Government have given to my memorandum. I suggested some safeguards, and I have no time to detail them. If contracts were given invariably to the lowest tender without the least discretion, the trouble would be minimised. No doubt the Government have issued instructions. But I do not think that those instructions are enough. The president of a local body has still some discretion in the matter of giving contracts and therefore the trouble is there. If the Government cannot move in this direction and accept my proposal of making it obligatory on the part of the presidents of local bodies to accept contracts on the lowest tender, the only other solution that I would offer is the appointment of executive officers for these local bodies with sufficient independent powers, uncontrolled in some clearly defined directions by presidents of local bodies. If I want an official, it is not because I have much more faith in officials. Some of them are very honest; there are a fair number of officials who are not above the considerations I referred to above. If there is bribery or corruption among the presidents of local bodies, there may be some excuse or justification. But with regard to officials, there can be no justification at all. In the matter of appointing executive officers for the local bodies the hon. the Chief Minister must exercise very careful consideration and select capable officers. In this respect, I should appeal to the reserved half to lend to the hon. the Chief Minister honest officials, men who have proved themselves to be thoroughly honest and reliable and not men whom they want to reject, because there is something against them. We want executive officers who will be above all these petty considerations. Unless the right sort of executive officers are appointed, it would only be adding to the list of officers with high salary. In this direction and in many others, the discretion of the presidents of local bodies ought to be fettered in the interests of the proper administration of these local bodies. There are a number of directions in which executive officers can exercise independent powers without the interference of the presidents of local bodies. One direction in which the Government can entrust independent powers to executive officers is in the matter of contracts.

“ There is another direction in which executive officers can be given independent powers without being fettered by the control of the Presidents of local bodies. It is in the matter of assessing professional tax. If I am a president of a local body and if a rich and influential man comes and asks me to reduce his assessment or taxes, it would be very difficult for me to refuse him if I want to continue as president for a second time. He may be a man of great influence and the president of a local body would find it very delicate to assess properly in

[Mr. K. Koti Reddi] [2nd February 1934]

such cases. If the power of assessing and taxing people is left to be discharged by an executive officer who need not depend upon the votes of the members of the local bodies, he can discharge that work satisfactorily. This is one of the duties—there are many others—which can be entrusted to executive officers without being interfered with by presidents. I am not certain whether there are provisions in this Bill dealing with these points. It seems to me that the hon. the Chief Minister thinks that the time has come when it would be necessary to have executive officers for these local bodies. If executive officers are appointed, they must have absolute power in certain respects; they must have clearly demarked independent functions.

“I think there would be some difficulty if both the amendments are put to vote together. There will be some persons who may be against amendment No. 1 but who may be in favour of amendment No. 2 and *vice versa*. I suggest that votes may be taken separately on the amendments.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“If it is the desire of the House to go on with the discussion of this amendment, we can put it off till Monday.”

Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—“It is not our desire, Sir. It is for the Government to say yes or no. This is a matter which they may allow us to discuss at the Select Committee.”

* The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—“Sir, with regard to the desirability of retaining the intermediate boards in some form or another, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition stated that the Government were not definite in their opinion and that they had not come to any conclusions”

Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—“Sir, I know that the hon. the Chief Minister was against intermediate boards; some of the Members are in favour of such boards which will co-ordinate the work of the panchayats. I think power can be given to bring in this point before the Select Committee. I never meant that the hon. the Chief Minister was indefinite in his views; I know he has definite views in this matter.”

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—“Sir, I am sorry there has been misunderstanding on this point. As regards the general debate, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition thinks it is desirable to give necessary scope for the discussion of the various alternatives in the Select Committee. As far as this proposal is concerned, I have clearly stated that they have got ample powers under the existing Act to constitute joint committees. I consider that giving instructions to the Select Committee would only result in confusion and affect the main principle of the Bill which aims at the abolition of the taluk boards. I am afraid that it will not serve the purpose for which the Bill is intended. It will give scope for numerous proposals being put forward for introducing taluk boards in another name. Therefore I wish to oppose amendment No. 1. As regards amendment No. 2, in the present Bill we have no scheme for introducing executive officers on the lines of the District

2nd February 1934] [Raja of Bobbili]

Municipalities Act. As has been rightly pointed by my hon. Friend Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, the executive officer to be appointed for these local bodies is not in the same position as the commissioner of a municipality. Our idea was that some sort of uniformity might be introduced, as many district boards had varying scales of pay for their secretaries.

"As regards the other instruction which is sought to be given to the 5 p.m. Select Committee for amending the Act suitably on the lines of the recent amendment to the District Municipalities Act, I feel, Sir, that it is necessary to have a separate Bill on this subject, and that it will not be possible to introduce such far-reaching changes now. Further, I do not wish to make any secret of the fact that, although such a change will be necessary, sufficient time should elapse to see how far the experiment that is being tried in the case of the municipalities has been successful; in other words, some more time is required to see how the appointment of commissioners for municipalities will work. After satisfying ourselves with regard to its success, we will follow with the necessary Bill to extend that principle in the case of the district boards. I may also state without any mental reservation that from the way in which the Opposition has dealt with the Government Bill, it would be better in the interests of the Government to see that a smooth passage is assured in the Council in the further stages of the Bill, and I therefore do not wish to complicate matters by introducing further new questions into the subject. I accordingly oppose the motion."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I shall now put the motion to the vote of the House. The question is—

'that it be an instruction to the Select Committee—

- (1) *to consider the desirability of retaining intermediary boards in some form; and*
- (2) *also to consider the question of vesting the executive powers of the district board in an executive officer as has been done with regard to district municipalities.'*"

The motion was lost.

* Mr. M. DEVADASAN:—"Mr. President, Sir, I move the motion standing in my name—

'that it be an instruction to the Select Committee that they consider the provisions of the Bill further to amend the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, of Mr. Moses and embody into this Bill such of the provisions of Mr. Moses's Bill as they may consider desirable.'

In moving this motion, I wish to make a few observations. The principle of equal opportunities for all in the services under the local boards was discussed only yesterday and accepted by the Council. Mr. Moses introduced a Bill some time ago embodying this principle."

[2nd February 1934]

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"On a point of order, Mr. President. We do not know what the provisions of that Bill are, excepting the appellation 'Moses's Bill.' I think it is a tall order, Sir, to ask this House to vote for a motion of this sort, to instruct the Select Committee to deal with all the provisions contained in a Bill which has not been published and which is not known to most of the hon. Members here. I beg, Sir, that the rights of the House may be protected by your disallowing this motion."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I thought the hon. Member, Mr. Devadasan, would be explaining the principles of that Bill and to utilize a compendious term probably, he used the words 'Moses's Bill'. I think Mr. Moses' Bill was introduced on the 30th of last month."

Mr. M. DEVADASAN:—"It is a Bill to amend the Madras Local Boards Act, introduced by Mr. Moses, which embodies this principle of representation of all communities in the services of the local boards. There is no mistake about the object of that Bill."

"My Friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, raised an objection that the Bill was not published in the Gazette. I desire to point out to him that it would be a great saving of time if the provisions of that Bill also are considered by this Select Committee even now. A Select Committee which is to consist of 42 members can very well go into the question of the communal principle as well as the other provisions of this Bill relating to the abolition of taluk boards. We are now referring the Bill to amend the Local Boards Act to a Select Committee for considering the question of the abolition of taluk boards; and instead of having separate committees on separate Bills, I am sure it will be better to have one Committee to go into all connected questions and consider the provisions contained in a Bill introduced by another hon. Member. I request, at the same time, Sir, that the Bill introduced by Mr. Moses may be treated as an official Bill and added on to the official Bill now before us."

Rao Bahadur A. T. PANNIRSELVAM:—"Sir, I have great pleasure in seconding this motion of Mr. Devadasan. If this is accepted, I can tell Mr. Venkatachalam Chetti that it will carry us no further than the desire that he himself expressed in his speech yesterday when we had a discussion over the question of recruitment to services under local bodies, of communal representation. The Government are now going to take powers to frame rules regulating the recruitment to services and also for prescribing qualifications and things like that. This will enable the Committee to consider the desirability or possibility of so amending the Act as to give the Government the power also to incorporate the principle underlying the communal Government Order. It does not take us any further than that. This will enable us to get over the objection which the hon. the Raja of Bobbili pointed out yesterday that under the Act as it is, the Government were advised that it would not be possible for a local board to frame any rules in the matter of recruitment

2nd February 1934] [Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam]

on a communal basis. Mr. Moses's Bill would only enable the local bodies to do that. That is the only object underlying the Bill of Mr. Moses. Therefore, Sir, I think it would not be foreign to the main principles accepted by this House, and I hope that this motion will be accepted."

* The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Yesterday, Sir, this Council discussed at length a resolution which stated that the communal Government Order stated in that resolution should be applied to the services under local bodies; and from the opinions expressed on all sides of the House, I felt that there was unanimity of opinion that such a step should be undertaken. I consider, Sir, that the present is a suitable opportunity for attaining that object immediately. I also note that yesterday an amendment was carried that 'immediate steps' should be taken. I hope that all sides of the House would see no objection to this proposal."

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"May I suggest, Sir, that the matter be taken up on Monday? I do not think it is so simple as the hon. the Chief Minister thinks. No doubt everybody is in agreement with him in giving effect to the object which the hon. Mover of that motion had; but from my own point of view, I feel, as I said in connexion with the resolution, that the local bodies have already got that power at present, and it would be sheer interference on the part of the Government to say that they have no power. I do not know what the basis of the legal opinion is; and unless that opinion is made available to the hon. Members of this House, it is impossible to say that the local bodies have no such power. Apart from that, if communal representation is to be given statutory recognition in an Act, it would lead to this: suppose in an institution where it is possible to recruit officers from only one community—and that the majority community—by the introduction of communal rotation, it would mean that the offices in that institution which would naturally belong to a particular community, either on the ground of efficiency or merit or numbers in that locality, would have to be split up amongst several communities, which may after all prove not quite so advantageous as the hon. the Mover at present supposes. Whatever that may be, Sir, I do not know if the hon. the Chief Minister is going to take up the responsibility of saying that this is a very small matter and therefore it can be easily put into the other Bill. The abolition of the taluk boards is by itself a controversial matter, and in spite of the fact that 42 members have been appointed to the Select Committee, it may not be possible to have that Bill ready for discussion in the Council at the February or March meeting; and if this Bill also is going to be added on to it, probably it would retard the progress of the main Bill and would even frustrate the object which the hon. the Minister has in seeing that the taluk boards are abolished at the earliest possible moment. At any rate, Sir, I beg that the House might be given more time to discuss this matter before it is allowed to be decided upon by the Council."

[2nd February 1934]

* Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—“ I understand, Sir, that the principles underlying the Bill introduced by Mr. Moses were adopted by this House yesterday in a resolution which was carried, and that it also stated that ‘ steps should be taken immediately ’ to give effect to the communal principle. Having done so, I do not know whether it is necessary to consider the question again to-day in connexion with another Bill. That a policy of that kind should find place in an Act is, I think, Sir, a step which every one should object to. I do not think that Mr. Moses’s Bill should be taken into consideration now, as part of the Bill which we have just now referred to a Select Committee.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ I think the House is ready for a vote. The question is—

‘ that it be an instruction to the Select Committee that they consider the provisions of the Bill further to amend the Madras Local Boards Act of 1920 of Mr. Moses and embody into this Bill such of the provisions of Mr. Moses’s Bill as they may consider desirable ’.”

The motion was carried.

Mr. G. R. PREMAYYA :—“ I think I will be in order, Sir, if I propose that Mr. Moses’s name also be added on to the Select Committee.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ The hon. Member is not at all in order in doing it now.

“ I appoint Rao Bahadur Jagannatha Raju, Deputy President, as the Chairman of the Select Committee.”

The House then adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. on Monday, the 5th February 1934.

R. V. KRISHNA AYYAR,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.

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TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS